FENRIREALM
Reincarnated
AS THE
Narrow-eyed Character
IN A
Magical Girl
Battle Story

Information

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I’ve been reincarnated into the world of a depressing light novel from that era when magical girl stories were flooding the market.

And not just anywhere, but 3 years before the story’s original beginning… Am I destined to simply watch all the tragedies unfold?

Show More

Chapter 0 : Prologue. Life is...

At the age of 27, on a winter day, I realized that life rarely goes according to plan.

On the way home from enrolling in the elementary school I chose because it was close to the apartment I'd lived in since childhood, the car my whole family was riding in collided with a taxi driven by a drunk driver.

My father and I were unharmed, but my mother was left with lifelong aftereffects in one of her legs.

In middle school, the first friend I made revealed the pocket money in my pocket to some senior delinquents we encountered in an alley, and our relationship fell apart right there.

Looking back, it wasn't a big deal, but naive as I was, I spent the rest of middle school holed up in the library in protest, graduating without a single friend.

In high school, I achieved decent scores on the mock exams and dreamed of entering a prestigious university. I also saw my father and mother smile for the first time in a long while.

The next day, we found out that a severe illness had been discovered in my father's body.

After returning from the hospital, it was my father who comforted and lifted up the family that had been sitting in silence for a while.

"It's okay. Everything will be alright."

My mother and I believed those words and stood up again. And true to those words, happiness seemed to return to our family as we got back on our feet and started walking again.

“The surgery went well, and the CT scan came out clean. We’ll keep monitoring from here on.”

“Thank you, doctor!”

My father successfully underwent surgery.

“The apples Hyeonwoo’s mom sells are the most delicious, hoho.”

“Oh, thank you so much! Please come again!”

My mother’s fruit store became established in the neighborhood and is known for its generous hospitality and meticulous product management.

“Hey, Hyeonwoo, remember that senior from the club? He started a company and needs someone for an office job, so I recommended you.”

“Really? Thank you so much!”

I finally graduated from a decent university while juggling cram school and part-time jobs. Through an introduction from a senior who graduated before me, I set up an interview appointment at an office.

And the next month, my father passed away.

The illness had been discovered too late, so although treatment was barely successful through multiple surgeries over a long period, they say my father’s heart wasn’t healthy enough to withstand the prolonged surgeries and vital medications.

“…”

The sight of my mother’s back as she sobbed at the funeral was utterly pitiful.

The scratchy feel of the borrowed black suit pants from the funeral home.

The smell of greasy beef soup wafting from the kitchen pot.

The notification sound of my senior's message confirmed my decision to give up on the interview.

My dry eyes, no longer able to produce tears.

All the sensations felt through my five senses didn't feel real.

A despair so deep that everything felt like a floating dream.

"Father…"

And a few months after my father's funeral.

Screech—!

A flash of light encountered while coming out of an alley.

Pain felt throughout my body.

Gradual numbness spreads through my entire being.

Barely breathing while lying on the cold ground.

The breath of the driver checking on me.

A faint scent of alcohol on that breath.

As my consciousness faded while hearing the sound of the car driving away.

All I could worry about was my mother.

"Mo…m."

On that cold winter day, my first life ended like that.

And on a hot, rainy summer day…

I woke up in a shabby room, reborn as the silver-haired girl from the light novel world I had read when I was young.

Life truly… rarely goes according to plan.

Chapter 1 : The Colorless Magical Girl

In a shabby corner of the room.

Today, again, I open my eyes in my bleak room without a single piece of furniture.

“Aa-hm. Hm. One, two, three.”

As I clear my throat after waking up, the thin voice I’ve grown accustomed to hearing for two years comes out.

The scratchy cheap blanket laid out on the room floor.

The women’s training suit hanging on the wall.

White and slender fingers.

And the date shown immediately upon opening the old-fashioned cell phone.

June 6, 2011.

I’m 12 years back in the past from the day I died at 27.

More precisely, I’ve returned to the past of ‘The Novel’s Japan’ that I read during my middle school days.

This is not reality, but the world inside a light novel.

The place where I’ve spent the last two years.

“…”

Light Novel

This genre of literature, often called ‘ranobe’ for short, typically has a smaller book size than conventional novels and can be described as a subculture novel featuring illustrations with cute girl art styles. Among them, ＜Magical Girl HAZARD＞, which I read in middle school and am now inside of, is a depressing magical girl story.

Magical girl.

A term that makes children’s hearts flutter, and that word that made budding sprouts rush to the TV like zombies on Sunday mornings. The shy first love of those mischievous children of that era, led them to a land of dreams and hope as they sat in front of the TV, showing off their colorful hair.

But one day, that perception changed completely.

An animation that appeared like a comet, pleasing the eyes of magical girl genre fans who held onto pure innocence with its exquisite artwork and luxurious action.

＜Magical Girl Sakura Blossom＞

An episode of this work, which officially pushed the abbreviation MSB, completely changed the meaning of the word ‘magical girl.’

-Haruka onee-chan?

-Kyaaaah!

The reliable senior character Haruka, who had been fighting against fairytale-like designed enemies, let her guard down during the battle and was beheaded and killed.

The shocking truth is revealed.

-What are you saying? It’s right to call you magical girls because you’re seeds of witches, isn’t it? *(tl/n: the term magical girl (魔法小女) contains characters of the term witches (魔女))*

[Magical girls rise from the despair given to them in exchange for their wishes and fight against fate!]

MSB's bold attempt to throw despair into the magical girl genre, which was full of dreams and hope, gained explosive popularity. Although MSB, which clearly became the origin, was a work that drove characters into depressing situations to emphasize the hymn of humanity.

The works that followed, imitating MSB's success, all had unreasonable depressing elements. They were created not for characters to overcome but just to be depressing for the sake of being depressing.

<Magical Girl HAZARD>, which I had read, was also a work born in this trend.

A work that was nothing more than an imitation created by following fragments of a masterpiece.

A story of characters who exist just to become unhappy.

It's a harsh story where the protagonist tries to overcome everything with a righteous heart in unreasonable situations but ultimately experiences a desperate ending.

This work was translated and published in Korea through the efforts of a publishing company famous for only translating failed works.

"And I read that."

And I woke up in that world.

Rustle

As I get up, silver hair tickles the nape of my neck.

When I first inexplicably woke up as a silver-haired beautiful girl in this world, I was utterly confused.

"…"

I took out the glass star that I had always kept in my pocket for the past two years and looked at it.

A glass star where rainbow-like streaks of starlight swirl inside the colorless, transparent glass.

The moment I first saw this glass star, I couldn't help but despair.

If it were the past of the world I lived in, I would do anything to return to my mother.

But there was only one way to escape in this world of <Magical Girl HAZARD> where this glass star exists.

* * *

On a slightly hot early summer day.

Tokyo's Shibuya Scramble Crossing was full of people waiting for the signal.

The same everyday scene.

Numerous people gathered there.

Office workers who had finished their drowsy morning work on Monday were contemplating what menu to eat at the restaurants across the street to satisfy their hungry stomachs.

'Ah, I'm hungry.'

'What should I eat for lunch today?'

Female college students who came for shopping were chattering while looking at the 109 Department Store visible from across the crosswalk.

'I think my makeup is a bit off. Should I fix it in the bathroom?'

'I can't remember where the sale was.'

An ordinary scene like any other day.

12 o'clock sharp.

The sky turned red.

“Eh? What’s this?”

“A movie shooting?”

“What… the…?”

[Ah, ah, can you hear me?]

Along with a huge reverberation, a somewhat drowsy female voice echoed. At the same time, monitors, TVs, and cell phone screens worldwide turned red and emitted the same sound.

A clearly abnormal situation.

[I am the judge for this Magical Girl HAZARD □□□]

Woong-

“Ugh… ack…”

“Kyaaah!!”

The moment the woman was about to say her name, people on the street complained of headaches or started retching. Also, the woman’s name was inaudible, covered by a massive noise.

[…that’s who I am. Well… It’s probably an unacceptable name for you degraded people.]

The woman’s voice, which had been lacking in enthusiasm, now carried a hint of faint anger.

And the woman’s explanation began again.

[The ritual of human evolution.]

[<Magical Girl HAZARD> begins with 10,000 girls.]

[Girls who accept the seeds prepared for evolution will be given glass stars.]

A girl waiting for the signal cried out while looking at the shining glass star that was suddenly in her pocket.

“Eeh?! When did this get in here?”

“I, I don’t have one?”

[Depending on the number of starlights received, they hold a more substantial potential for evolution, and can become stronger more quickly according to the direction of fate each holds.]

[It’s also possible to increase the number of starlight by absorbing others’ starlight.]

The girls who were showing off their stars on the street heard this and hurriedly hid them in their clothes, terrified.

They began to look at each other with suspicious eyes, even though they hadn’t paid any attention to each other until just a moment ago.

[Please try to… achieve evolution by holding more starlight… if you can.]

[Next time, I’ll tell you a more detailed story.]

[Face the fate of humanity with a cautious attitude.]

Adding one last sentence in a very small voice.

[…Though you probably can’t.]

“…”

The scenery returned to normal.

That day, the whole world was set ablaze by that event.

* * *

The original story has finally begun.

To be precise, ‘that incident,’ which will happen about a year later, becomes the main content of volume 1, but from now on, we can consider that we’ve entered the flow of events.

I was secretly sweating among the crowd of people.

Because I knew what was going to happen after this.

Because I knew that what lay ahead was by no means peaceful.

“What on earth is going on?”

“Um… nothing happened, so it’s fine, right?”

“It must have been some kind of movie or game promotion event.”

Murmur murmur

Despite the anomalous event where the sky all over the world had turned red just moments ago and, an unidentified object was distributed to everyone in a language they could all understand.

People tried to return to their daily lives.

Because they thought it had nothing to do with them.

“…”

I quietly took out the glass star and looked at it.

Three colorful lights formed a triangle inside the transparent glass star, emitting a huge starlight.

Because of this colorless glass star.

I despaired upon realizing that this world was inside a fictional story.

And I held hope because I could receive the power to escape this world.

Three lights.

This enormous power, called a born 3-star, was at the same level as the four strongest survivors in the original story.

It was my last hope to endure the numerous unreasonable battles, borrow this world’s immense power, and return to my original world.

“Mother.”

I carefully put this last hope in my chest and muttered.

“I’ll definitely come back.”

My previous life.

Sim Hyun-woo closed his eyes in a cold alley on a winter day in 2023. And he woke up again as Shirogane Hikari in another world.

“…”

As I thought of my mother, I looked up at the sky, suppressing the sadness that was rising again.

On a hot early summer day in June 2011.

The sky on the day of the first incident of <Magical Girl HAZARD>, an apocalyptic story where most of humanity perishes due to fighting and only a few magical girls survive, had returned to its usual blue color.

“So what should we eat for lunch now?”

“Hmm, let’s just eat hamburgers or something.”

“How about katsudon?”

Watching people quickly return to their daily lives after the extraordinary events of the past few minutes, I carefully put the glass star in my chest and headed back home.

Fearing that the tragedy of <Magical Girl HAZARD> might strike at any moment.

“I think that girl who just passed by also received a glass star?”

“Really? She was really pretty.”

“I wonder if her hair was dyed.”

I was worried that the lamp of hope I received in this strange world

might go out.

I was just afraid of everything that would come in the future.

I was afraid of everything.

Chapter 2 : The Colorless Magical Girl

[In short, the term ‘magical girl’ is a kind of euphemism.]

[In this case, it’s more appropriate to view it as a happening related to a pseudo-religious group.]

[It’s a sign foretelling the apocalypse of 2012!]

[God has personally descended to choose ten thousand apostles!]

[It’s a broadcast hijacking of unprecedented scale in history, shown through monitors worldwide.]

[Since it could have caused various accidents, the culprit will have difficulty avoiding major responsibility.]

[Who could be the entity that delivered stars to so many girls?]

Three days had passed since the opening declaration, but Japan was still burning hot.

All mass media, including radio and newspapers, unanimously added baseless stories. Of course, it’s basic etiquette to talk while taking out insurance by saying, ‘The content of this broadcast is merely the opinion of the performers.’

Lying down in the 6-tatami one-room apartment where I’ve lived for two years and listening to the radio gave me a strange feeling. Thanks to some good connections I was fortunate to make, I could earn some living expenses despite being a minor. Still, it was difficult to buy expensive electronic devices, so I frequently used the radio.

‘To think I’d end up living with a radio I never even listened to in my

previous life.'

From the first day I came to this world, I was lying in this room wearing a school uniform. The only things in the room were the colorless star holding three starlights that I was holding in my hand, just enough cash for transportation, and a student ID with my name on it.

"…"

It gave me chills, as if the person who brought me here was blatantly instructing me to go to school. Still, from my perspective, having experienced even repeating a year for college entrance exams, I didn't feel like going back to school just to eat school lunches.

'At this age, going back to eat school lunches is a bit… No, Japanese schools don't provide lunches in the first place, do they?'

This work described the protagonist, Shikishima Yuki, eating her lunch in the bathroom while being bullied, so that must be the case.

'Poor kid, I know that feeling well.'

I, too spent my middle school days holed up in the library alone, engrossed in reading books I brought. I brought and read <Magical Girl HAZARD> that was being sold second-hand in used bookstores.

[What is Magical Girl HAZARD?]

[Well, it's presumed to be a proper noun referring to some kind of metaphor or event.]

[The word 'hazard' implies risk or threat to the subject.]

In fact, it doesn't have much meaning. In the author's afterword in the final volume, he mentions that he suggested the title to the editor after it suddenly came to mind while playing a zombie shooting game and was surprised when it was approved.

[What do fate and evolution related to 'stars' mean?]

[Could it be a religious metaphor?]

[That's why I view this incident as the work of a pseudo-religious group.]

[In my opinion, this situation is…]

I turned off the radio, tired of the broadcast that started filling time with meaningless words, repeating the same things differently because no one knew anything, and repeatedly reacting as if it was new every time.

"Nngh~!"

As I stretched, two hills that weren't visible in my previous life majestically unfolded below my field of vision.

Creak

The legs visible below the shorts I wore comfortably at home were white and slender enough to remind one of a porcelain doll.

I've become all too familiar with a girl's body over two years.

Now I feel nothing.

I put both hands into the sleeves of the black training suit I had carelessly taken off on the floor to wear it, and pulled up the zipper.

Clack!

"Ouch?!"

Occasionally, when I absent-mindedly pulled up the zipper all the way like in my previous life, a slight pain would come when it got caught on the majestic hills that weren't there in my previous life.

'Damn it.'

To think I'd only get to touch what I wished I could have touched in my previous life after dying. I shook off the inexplicable gloom with a brief massage.

Those things, as if molded into the very shape of the word 'fluffy',

proudly appealed their texture as they escaped between my fingers while I kneaded them.

‘Damn, the texture is unnecessarily good…’

I headed to my familiar workplace, holding these two massive objects that I couldn’t boast about to anyone, nor did I want to.

A white building standing impressively against the backdrop of a seaside landscape.

Neatly decorated antique props.

A sophisticated cafe you might suddenly enter if you pass through Yokohama.

＜The black boss＞, the pride of Yokohama, Kanagawa Prefecture, opens at 11 AM and closes at 6 PM, and its best-selling menu is the special lunch sold for two hours from noon.

For the past two years, I have been spending my days working here as a waitress.

“Good work.”

“You too, Master.”

“Mm.”

The Master was an old man who, with his retirement money, bought a small building on the outskirts of Tokyo and ran a cafe. He preferred to be called ‘Master’ rather than by his name or surname.

“Be careful on your way home today too.”

He was usually taciturn, but he would see me off with a gruff voice when I changed clothes and came out after finishing work hours.

“Yes, Master.”

In fact, this person is a character that appears in the original work.

I was able to find this place because the location was described in

detail in an episode where the protagonist, Shikishima Yuki, collapsed on the street after an unreasonable fight and was treated in a closed shop.

‘It was memorable because it was one of the few peaceful daily events in ＜Magical Girl HAZARD＞.’

After a massive battle that engulfed all of Japan, including the Tokyo area, the shop was shattered, and when Yuki returned here, she despaired while looking at an empty cup filled with rainwater.

It was also the place I came to without thinking on the first day I arrived in this world, as it was the first place that came to mind that could give me the certainty that ‘if this place exists, then this world is that place,’ when I couldn’t escape from shock and anxiety for three days.

-*Business hours are over, but.*

-*One special lunch, please.*

-…*Alright.*

I can’t forget the kindness of the Master who didn’t turn me away and fed me when I staggered in at closing time. Above all, there’s also the kindness of agreeing when I asked about part-time work without asking too many questions.

“What are you standing there blankly for?”

“Ah… I’m sorry. I just had something on my mind.”

“No need to apologize.”

Our conversations are always like this.

There’s subtle concern in the words he throws out gruffly.

Perhaps it’s because in the past he lost his daughter…

“Come to think of it, Hikari.”

“Yes?”

“Is it alright for you not to go to school?”

“Ah～ I’m trying various things after just graduating middle school because I want to get a job quickly.”

It’s a lie.

I’ve never even enrolled in, let alone graduated from, a middle school in this world.

Thinking about what’s to come, I won’t have time to get a job.

“Even so, it’s not to the extent of giving up on high school, is it? You’re still young.”

“It’s fine. I’m enjoying working at Master’s shop that I found by chance, and I want to learn more.”

It’s a lie.

I knew about his shop through the original work.

When I first said I wanted to work part-time, I did so knowing it would be easier to use his longing for his lost daughter to make a living.

“It’s no good to completely give up just because you fell behind by a mere two years.”

“…”

“If you ever become interested in going to high school, contact me.”

“Yes. Thank you, Master.”

Not long after I came to this world.

The Master agreed even when a silver-haired girl with completely Western features who obviously looked like a teenager suddenly declared she wanted to work part-time.

-Alright. I'll start by teaching you how to clean.

In the days that followed.

The Master discreetly asked about my family situation when I continued to work diligently, even during school hours.

-My father is Japanese and my mother was an illegal Russian immigrant worker, but both of them…

After that question, the Master never mentioned my family situation or parents again. His gruff attitude remained the same afterward, but I could feel his kindness deepening.

"…"

Is it because of the lies that completely deceived his heart, or because of the guilt of carelessly knowing about his story of losing his daughter, which he never revealed even in the latter part of the work?

I didn't lie to him after that lie.

I revealed my true feelings to the Master as much as possible.

Even if I hid the truth from the Master, I no longer deceived him.

Still, he helped me silently without asking many questions.

"I'm really fine."

"…I see."

My eyes, thanks to their upward-slanting shape, turned into strange slits with just a slight smile.

Even though anyone could see my suspicious appearance.

He still believed in me.

"Be careful on your way home. The rumors these days are ominous."

"Yes, Master."

If the awkwardly smiling employee and the cafe master had a more relaxed situation and time, they might have opened their hearts to each other and become like father and daughter.

At least for now, this was the most appropriate distance for both of us.

* * *

It took about 30 minutes by train from Iskawacho Station, where my part-time job was, to my home (Shibuya).

In 2011 Japan, smartphones were starting to become widespread.

I wasn't in a position to buy a smartphone yet, so I activated a feature phone with the Master's help.

I heard a rumor that malicious collectors would come to demand public broadcasting fees if you bought a smartphone capable of receiving TV signals in any way.

'I don't want to get involved with anyone else anymore.'

I didn't have anyone to exchange emails with, and I had given up on further education, so the only thing I could do with my phone was to contact the Master.

Looking around blankly at the scenery inside the train, I could still see many people reading books or newspapers.

[What is Magical Girl HAZARD.]

A term mentioned along with the shocking opening declaration.

What exactly is a magical girl?

What is the fate that the stars hold?

In what direction will this incident lead the girls?

That word is one that people approach with pure curiosity.

I was afraid every time I saw it.

That's why in this world, only I was preparing for it.

[The next station is Shibuya, Shibuya Station.]

If you pass through the empty lot in an alley on the outskirts of Shibuya, there's a small, shabby apartment where I live.

It would be troublesome to think of Korean apartments when I say apartment.

Perhaps, to a Korean's impression, it would be closer to a villa.

From my two years of living experience, I can assure you that no one lives here except for me, who lives on the third floor.

For rent, you should leave an envelope of cash under the sign the owner has put up on the designated day.

'Except for the note with instructions that was in front of the house when I had been in this world for about a month, I've never seen any trace.'

It's very creepy, but even at best, it's hard to find a space in Tokyo where a high school girl can live alone comfortably, so I just lived there.

'Even I don't know much about this living space.'

Because it was located in a hard-to-find place beyond the alley, despite being in the central area of Shibuya, this area was very sparsely populated and even gave off a desolate atmosphere.

Because it was such a desolate space, there was something I could do with peace of mind.

That is magic practice.

Since receiving the star, all magical girls can use basic magic.

If you know the secrets related to the star, you can gain even more superior power.

Among them, I had the same power as the four strongest characters in the original work.

The four strongest.

Born 3-star magical girls.

The four magical girls with absolute power, also likened to the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, sometimes opposed or cooperated with the protagonist Shikishima Yuki in the original work. All of them survived until the latter half, when the protagonist's group died.

[Magical Girl of Death] Dark Blue

[Magical Girl of Revelation] White Silver

[Magical Girl of War] Red Brown

[Magical Girl of Plague] Black

The girls with four colors of starlight possessed aliases that seemed a million light-years away from the title of magical girl and boasted fitting powers.

What's needed to use that power.

Blooming.

The true power of a magical girl.

The stage where one can truly accept the fate pouring from the starlight.

The beginning of a magical girl.

I had already achieved that 'blooming'.

And I'm probably the first and only magical girl who has completed blooming at this point in time.

"…Transform!"

Chapter 3 : The Colorless Magical Girl

The energy of starlight enveloped my body, and the appearance that was revealed was like that of a magician.

Black suit pants clinging to my legs, topped with a white blouse.

A black cape that sparkled as if it held starlight.

A black staff in one hand, a black silk hat in the other.

I was wearing exactly the kind of outfit one would imagine when thinking of a magician.

“It would be nice if it wasn’t so tight in the crotch area.”

It was the downside of the outfit that clung to emphasize the chest in contrast to the thin waist.

In short, the outfit I was wearing was a subculture reinterpretation of a formal suit, so it was a suit that revealed my dramatic figure as a woman.

Tap!

When I struck the black staff on the ground, a rainbow-colored spark arose.

Looking at it, I elegantly put on the silk hat I had selected as my unique weapon, and the three-star decorations on the cape sparkled in the moonlight.

The abilities used by magical girls according to the dreams contained in the starlight are full of individuality.

There are abilities based on the most primitive concepts, like breathing fire, spewing lightning, or shooting water. There are also those who can erect solid walls, summon transformation robots, or summon machine guns.

In addition to these unique abilities, there are three basic magics that everyone shares.

The first is psychic.

Incredibly, telekinesis is provided as a basic ability.

This magic, most commonly used by magical girls, varies significantly in level depending on skill and talent. And if used by me, a born 3-star like the four strongest, even basic magic can be used at a level comparable to other magical girls' unique powers.

'While controlling the power appropriately.'

Not long after I had bloomed.

For a long time, I couldn't control my power and kept destroying everything, but after two years of constant practice, I finally succeeded in controlling it to the point where I could move structures without destroying them.

'Maybe I'm not able to use this power properly because I tried to forcibly uncover the fate in the first place.'

Tap!

With that thought, I struck the staff shortly, and multicolored light burst out from the colorless star, surrounding the empty lot of the old apartment and becoming a hemispherical barrier that blocked noise.

Unique skill.

The magic of a true magical girl who has completed blooming and uses transformation reflects the dreams and fate contained in the star, operating in a way that contains each one's attributes.

In my case, it was transformed into illusion-type magic containing

the fate of [Deception], and all magic had the characteristic of thousand changes that could reflect illusions.

If I spread out the curtain of illusion and adjusted the scenery of the apartment's empty lot, I could practice large-scale magic without being detected to some extent. Of course, in a place where people are concentrated, someone might notice the sense of incongruity.

Creeeeak—

With an unpleasant sound, a container used as storage in the middle of the empty lot floated up, slowly rising to about 10 meters, like a scene from a cosmic horror movie. If a giant invisible giant were to grip and lift the container, would it look like this?

The amount of starlight that a 3-star magical girl basically has is indeed at a monstrous level, so I wasn't tired at all even after showing this level of performance. I could maintain it sufficiently while doing other training for a while.

I then cast the second basic magic.

The second basic magic is Blink.

Short-distance warp is the primary movement skill for magical girls.

Snap!

I elegantly grabbed the cape fluttering over the blouse with one hand, covering my body as if drawing a curtain, and felt as if I was detached from this world for a moment, floating in the air.

Now, I can move to the desired location in an instant by setting the target point. But I also separated my consciousness.

Creak-

On the third floor of the apartment, 'I' succeeded in arriving at the room where I was residing.

Somewhere in the corner of the empty lot, another 'I' succeeded in short-distance movement.

From somewhere in the shadows of the storage in the empty lot, another ‘me’ succeeded in coming up.

This was repeated a total of 6 times, and there were a total of 7 ‘me’s gathered one by one in the apartment’s empty lot.

The illusion of [Deception] added the function of creating doubles to the teleportation.

And the illusion of [Deception] also changed the third magic, healing magic.

However, that power was of no use at the moment, so I decided to end the training.

Snap!

With the sound of a finger snap, all the scenes disappeared as if they were lies, and the quiet apartment empty lot returned to its appearance.

After finishing the training, I washed up at the tap and returned home, flopping down.

Since blooming the power of a magical girl, I’ve been practicing magic alone, but somehow it felt like hitting my head against a brick wall.

‘Soon, the first thing 1-star magical girls would use on their own would probably be psychic and heal.’

Although there wasn’t a detailed description of how it was used in the work, magical girls were said to start manifesting supernatural abilities all over Japan shortly after their appearance.

The healing ability used by magical girls in this world was not amplifying regenerative power by accelerating cells, but magic that truly causally made diseases or injuries ‘non-existent’.

Of course, it couldn’t heal amputations or congenital disabilities, but nevertheless, the usefulness of this power was beyond words.

That's why from the moment 1-star magical girls learned psychic and heal, society became desperate to bring magical girls under their control.

'Even with just basic magic, the value of magical girls skyrocketed vertically, but the real revolution is the 'blooming' of magical girls.'

When headhunting for 1-star magical girls who could use basic magic was in full swing, and research on ability blooming was being conducted through human experiments on orphaned magical girls under the surface.

The magical girls who were used as test subjects realized that Fujimoto Group was behind all of this and rebelled against the state and corporations. However, the daughter of the Fujimoto family head bloomed as a born 2-star magical girl, was given the fate of [Protection], and repelled all the magical girls who came to attack for the rebellion.

After that, magical girls became aware of their own power and competed and formed factions as more 'evolved' humans.

"…"

In the greater chaos to come, magical girls will begin to wield absolute social power, starting to destroy the existing order.

The beginning of all events.

The Shinjuku Incident caused by the [War] magical girl.

The tragedy of the protagonist Shikishima Yuki who got involved there.

The society of magical girls in a world where everything is broken and changed.

I gradually fell asleep thinking about these things again.

Imagining enduring all these things and returning to my mother at home.

* * *

“Huff… huff…”

Busujima Haruko, who ‘was’ an ordinary middle school girl, was out of her mind.

It was because she had struck down Yamahara, the delinquent girl who had been bullying her, with a brick, knocking her unconscious.

Childish provocations like emphasizing ‘Busu’ (ugly) from her surname Busujima were the basics.

They tore up her favorite manga book, which she loved, plastered it on the classroom blackboard, incited other girls, and chased her around to all the places where she could eat her lunch, bullying her, finally, from the day she was chased out of even the bathroom after being doused with water and had to eat her meal at the garbage incinerator.

Haruko felt like gunpowder was piling up somewhere in her heart.

-If… if I don’t prove that I’m special by bullying someone… I can’t live!

When she was chosen as a magical girl after the red broadcast, receiving proof that she was special.

She was convinced that her own thoughts were proven right.

-See, I’m… I’m more… than someone like you!

However, when she heard rumors that Yamahara, who was bullying her, had also become a magical girl.

Haruko felt like her head was spinning.

-Ken-chan! I’ve become special now too!

The day after seeing Yamahara boasting to her boyfriend, when Yamahara called her out and heard what she wanted, it felt like she was driven to the edge of a cliff.

-Hey, an inferior kid like you doesn't need something like that at all, so why don't you hand it over?

-N-No!!

When she saw Yamahara, who said she would become even more special if her stars increased, sitting on top of her petite frame and forcibly tried to take away her star.

Haruko felt something heavy in her hand.

[Magical girl A from Arakawa Ward was unharmed despite being hit by a steel bar while passing by a construction site.]

[This incident revealed that magical girls are physically stronger than ordinary people…]

[Compared to ordinary people, it's as if magical girls are always wearing protective gear.]

[Moreover, these changes are accelerating.]

The violence that she originally wouldn't have been able to commit due to her conscience.

It was carried out with the news she had heard on the morning news today becoming a trigger in the confusing situation.

There would be no problem.

Haruko swung what she was holding in her hand, and Yamahara collapsed right there.

"…"

Ah.

She did it.

Finally, the gunpowder in her heart ignited, and through the shock of the violence carried out, Haruko, who was trembling, heard a male voice.

“Hey, what are you doing there?”

“Eek!?”

It seems Yamahara’s boyfriend thought it was suspicious that the two of them hadn’t come out after going into the alley to talk. A tanned male student with a rough impression approached with a frown.

He discovered Yamahara, who had fainted and was trembling.

“Yacchan? Is that Yacchan collapsed there?!”

“Ah… aaaah…!”

What should I do.

She did it.

She hit someone.

If she gets caught by the police like this, suspension or expulsion would be the least of her worries, and her parents would be contacted too.

‘What should I do what should I do what should I do what should I do…’

In the intense panic, she saw the male student tapping on his mobile phone to report.

Haruko pointed her finger.

Without knowing what she could do.

Chapter 4 : The Colorless Magical Girl

[Good morning everyone. This is Yamada's Morning Walk.]

[Today, we have a special guest who has been chosen as a ma-gi-cal girl!]

[G-Good morning! I'm Shizuku from Narita City, Chiba Prefecture!]

[Haha, no need to be nervous, Shizuku-chan.]

[I never thought I'd be on here because my mama… I mean, my mom always plays Yamada-san's Morning Walk at the store.]

[Does Shizuku-chan call her mother 'mama'?]

[Ah! W-Well, about that…]

The girl was flustered by the childish term that unconsciously came out of her mouth, making an 'awuu' sound0 in embarrassment.

The audience rather liked it, making fond laughing sounds, and the studio was filled with a warm atmosphere.

I turned off the radio without listening to the end of the morning traffic report read by the girl named Shizuku.

'Now the changes are slowly starting.'

A week after the opening declaration, also called the red broadcast.

On the Monday that came again, there was a different atmosphere flowing than usual.

It was because changes were detected in the girls who received stars.

It wasn't a negative change.

If it were, it wouldn't have been just a change in atmosphere, but parents would have burst into worried screams and rushed into hospitals all at once.

These changes were introduced through vivid testimonies of people featured in various news and weekly magazines.

-Until recently, I had a lot of acne and skin troubles, but they've disappeared!

-I've grown a bit taller… and suddenly developed here and there…

-The doctor said I've become incomparably healthier than a week ago.

Girls who were extremely ordinary until just a week ago.

After receiving the glass stars, parts that had been distorted during their growth process, like teeth or eyesight, were corrected, and they changed into ideal forms through various changes.

In just a week, they showed external changes that were incomparable to before.

People who witnessed these changes began to get excited as if it were a festival.

Although the atmosphere was mostly dazed by the suddenly changed reality, the thrill shared through the unconscious spread throughout the country.

Even though it wasn't happening to them, people wanted to see the girls showing dramatic changes like butterflies emerging from cocoons, and they rejoiced in the changes happening to these girls as if they were their own.

[Magical Girls = Salvation]

[New Humanity of a New Era?]

[Witnessing Human Evolution]

[Observing Their Changes]

The girls of the new era who suddenly appeared became the pride of the nation and new idols.

Entertainment companies that caught onto the fervent desire of the citizens in just 3 days worked tirelessly over the weekend to turn these girls into true idols.

[We accept reports from those who have received glass stars 24 hours a day.]

[We welcome magical girls who want to appear on broadcasts.]

With the conviction that higher ratings would go to the broadcasting stations that recruited more magical girls.

On the much-anticipated Monday.

Girls proving that they had become magical girls appeared as surprise guests on all regular broadcasts of all TV stations. And viewers who witnessed them wanted to see them as entertainment, showering them with all sorts of personal questions.

In just a week, they forgot about the memories related to the ominous broadcast and were solely focused on the visible interest.

In just a week, magical girls were being well-packaged and turned into products.

A series of almost manic trends was spreading throughout society.

Before this world moves towards true tragedy.

The last step.

"…"

I went out to the street, leaving everything behind.

Ping pong

Ping pong

Ping pong

What made me realize I was in Japan immediately after reincarnating into this world wasn't the Japanese flowing from my mouth like water or the student ID written in Japanese, but this crosswalk signal sound.

In my previous life, I lived in a provincial city in Korea where crossing at a signal was considered a luxury, and there was intense eye contact battles between vehicles and pedestrians.

That's why I felt unfamiliar and floating from each of these small atmospheric details.

If I had been someone who enjoyed traveling in my previous life, I might have considered even this atmosphere as a kind of romance.

But I didn't feel that way.

All that was left was the loneliness of a foreigner.

A foreign substance dropped alone in this world.

The longing to return.

The bewilderment about the changed body.

The fragments of emotions falling like crumbs in my heart tormented me in various parts of daily life.

"Is she a model? What a unique impression."

"She seems to be from abroad."

"Wow, those breasts."

I put aside all thoughts and glared at the guy who just muttered about breasts.

'Who is that guy.'

The guy who was waiting next to the crosswalk lowered his head when our eyes met and pretended to be surfing the web on his

smartphone.

“Wow… what a heartbreaking story.”

“…”

My upward-slanting narrow eyes often exerted their power.

Anyway.

An impression closer to Caucasian than Japanese in appearance.

Eyes that almost close when smiling slightly.

Red eyes occasionally glimpsed between the eyelids.

And quite large ones that contrast with the youthful impression…

“…Haah.”

Because of this unique appearance, I was gradually getting used to hearing numerous gazes and mutterings while stopping briefly on the street like this, but this time I felt a fresh unpleasantness.

‘Even if it were the me from my previous life, I probably would have stared if a silver-haired beautiful girl was walking around openly.’

Seeing my unique appearance reminded me of the advice the Master had given.

-You have a decent appearance, so it’s better to pressure others with a smile rather than getting angry.

-With a smile? How? Can you show me, Master?

-Sure. Just like that, smirking like an old man.

-I’m not an old man.

The Master, who chuckled, said seriously.

-As you live, you’ll often find that getting angry indiscriminately is a bad move.

-Won't they look down on me if I don't get angry?

-Even if you get angry, instead of lashing out indiscriminately, you pressure the other person calmly with spirit.

-Are you saying that suits me?

-Yes. Your heart isn't weak and delicate like that of an ordinary girl, is it?

At that time, the Master quietly stared at me over his glasses.

-Strong and calm towards the other person with spirit. That suits you very well.

-I see.

The wisdom of someone who had lived life first, not just knowledge to boast about.

Even for me, who would be 29 years old if I added the age from my previous life, I heard many good stories that could be called enlightening.

Thanks to that, I was able to get by without being looked down upon by rude riffraff like that guy just now.

Ping pong

Ping pong

Ping pong

My thoughts were cleared by the sound of the law's majesty stopping drivers and protecting weak pedestrians, and I moved my feet.

On the way into the convenience store, I saw newspaper stands spread out.

[Girls' Talk Show! This week's guest is…]

[Monthly School Look: Magical Girl Special Edition]

Everywhere was filled with stories about magical girls.

That treatment somewhere between idol and aspiring athlete.

There, an unconscious admiration for superior bloodlines and a desire for the realization of perfect idols down to the genetic level were revealed.

Just a gaze looking at products.

It also meant that magical girls' abilities were not yet treated as abilities that could overturn society.

According to the story in the original work, it wouldn't be long before the perception changed from just treating them as pretty youngest children to core human resources of the nation. The beginning of the tragedy that occurred in the early days of magical girl society, which was vaguely hinted at in the original work.

[Magical Girl Supernatural Ability Weaponization Plan]

The plan that failed with too many sacrifices gives birth to the seeds of discord along with the full-fledged blooming of magical girls.

The formation of 'FLAG', a terrorist organization composed of magical girls who became suspicious of the state and social system.

'FLAG' and 'Corporate Alliance'

'Magical Girls' and 'the State'

Days different from the peaceful two years so far were coming.

Within 6 months, corporations and nations that realized the value of basic magic form an alliance.

At the same time, FLAG is formed in opposition to the alliance's [Magical Girl Supernatural Ability Weaponization Plan].

Simultaneously, the 'blooming' of the first 2-star magical girl begins.

And due to the disaster caused by the [War] magical girl, all of Japan, including Shinjuku, turns into a lawless zone.

I sighed and put down the newspaper.

* * *

“Inspector Oshima. This is an order from above.”

“Who’s in charge?”

“From Superintendent Yamashita…”

“I see. Directly under the Superintendent General?”

Oshima, who was leisurely heading to the cafeteria during lunch time, carefully opened the file handed to him by his subordinate.

[This report is about the supernatural abilities used at various locations, including the crime scene of Miss B, who is presumed to be a magical girl…]

“Supernatural abilities?”

[…In short, they are presumed to be unique abilities manifesting in girls called magical girls.]

[Ahead of full-scale research, an environment where we could be attacked by public opinion might be created.]

[Therefore, we aim to collect samples in a state where we can restrain them without noise and conduct research.]

“…”

“The headquarters instructed to carry it out as quietly as possible.”

“I understand.”

Chapter 5 : The Colorless Magical Girl

Chiyoda Ward, where the offices and headquarters of the national infrastructure facilities necessary for 120 million Japanese people to live are located.

Here, bureaucrats in suits were busy answering phones or skimming newspapers with cold expressions, holding coffee in one hand.

Some busy handling urgent matters.

Some sighing over things that weren't going well.

Some just wishing for this time to pass.

A street where numerous human figures in suits gather.

If you follow that street, you'll come across the Metropolitan Police Department, which can be called the heart of Tokyo's public safety, also called headquarters by those working on the front lines.

As Tokyo is a megalopolis where people, equivalent to 10% of all of Japan, live in just 23 special wards, excluding suburban areas.

The Metropolitan Police Department, which is in charge of Tokyo, always spends bustling days with various incidents and accidents.

A meeting was held in the conference room of the Metropolitan Police Department building about an incident that occurred just a week ago, among numerous other incidents and accidents.

On the monitor in the conference room, a scene of the suspect fleeing immediately after causing an injury incident was being played.

The suspect has been in hiding for a week after fleeing.

They've been patrolling places commonly used as escape routes after juvenile crimes, including the suspect's home, nearby parks, internet cafes, and manga cafes, but haven't been caught for a week.

"Yamashita-kun, could you show it again?"

"Yes, sir!"

The young elite police officer with a bright blue-shaved side of his head was merely acting as a remote control for old men, but no one questioned it.

[Japanese people are a nation of loyalty, and it's the dream of Japanese boys to participate in great affairs by serving as the arms and legs of high elders.]

This is because only people who sincerely believe this or can pretend to do so can gather here.

An old and outdated bureaucratic society.

In that place, only vertically extending thoughts were forgiven.

"…Who did you say the suspect was?"

"Busujima Haruko. Age 13. She was a female student with antisocial tendencies who didn't get along with her classmates and was isolated."

Content that was all written in the report was distributed to participants just before the meeting.

The report was well delivered to the homes of high-ranking officials in a luxury cover on the morning of the meeting day, but one high-ranking official sitting at the head of the table asked in detail as if testing.

Yamashita was not unaware of the meaning of this question.

If he honestly recited only the contents of the report here, he would be assigned to a rural corner of Hokkaido or Tsushima District Station the next day. This was because asking again through the mouth of a

high-ranking official about content they already knew was a kind of interrogation like ‘Do we have to take charge of this at our level?’

“The Superintendent General is paying attention to this case.”

“What? Superintendent General Ishikawa?”

“Hmm… why is he paying attention to such a trivial case.”

It was incomprehensible that the Superintendent General had issued an emergency summons for officials at the department head level and above from the morning over just one juvenile violent crime.

As it felt quite dissonant, the officials gathered here wanted a justification to resolve their uncomfortable feelings.

Yamashita, who graduated from the University of Tokyo’s Law Department, was not an ordinary person lacking the tact to miss this signal, so he pointed out a part that was written in the report but that high-ranking officials didn’t care about.

“The initial injury was carried out using a brick the suspect picked up in a nearby alley… but the Superintendent General is focusing on the second injury that occurred.”

“Indeed, it’s hard to understand even when looking at it.”

“Suddenly twisting in the air and flying far away.”

On the monitor, Haruko’s figure was shown trembling all over and sitting down.

Then the scene of her gesturing to the male student who was reporting was played.

The male student flew back 1 meter by an unknown force as if a puppet with its strings cut and lost consciousness while convulsing.

“Did the suspect, being a magical girl, use some kind of magic…”

“What does that matter? This isn’t child’s play; what nonsense is that?”

“Ahem. It was just a passing comment.”

Director Mori chuckled at the words of the official who had muttered after listening to a radio show featuring magical girls on the way.

Magical girls? Those girls? Don’t make me laugh.

Mere pseudo-idols who just appear on TV and radio grinning, having such supernatural powers?

It would be more reasonable to suspect an explosion due to a gas leak that wasn’t caught on the recorded video, as the rationality of someone living in modern society.

But as if to contradict Director Mori’s inner thoughts, Yamashita answered.

“That’s exactly the point.”

“What?”

“It is magic.”

“Not a gas leak, but real magic?”

“It was the Superintendent General’s instruction to distribute this to personnel at the department head level and above.”

The document that Yamashita carefully removed from the briefcase he had quietly placed in the corner of the conference room.

It contained the signatures of the Superintendent General, the Commissioner General of the National Police Agency, the Chiefs of Staff of the Ground, Maritime, and Air Self-Defense Forces, and Congressman Fujimoto, who is mentioned as a strong candidate for the next president of Japan’s ruling party.

“Fu-Fujimoto Congressman?!”

“Why is a prominent figure in the cabinet…?”

“Even ministerial-level officials…?”

“What’s going on here?”

Murmur murmur

People were thrown into confusion after confirming the names written on the document.

Yamashita opened his mouth after confirming that the plan had been placed in the hands of all officials.

“The supernatural abilities believed to have been used by the suspect Busujima Haruko are gradually manifesting in ability users across Japan, commonly referred to as magical girls.”

“…!”

“I’ve heard that Miss Fujimoto, the daughter of Congressman Fujimoto, who established this plan, has also become a magical girl.”

“Then this wasn’t simply for investigating an injury case?”

Yamashita nodded his head greatly, conveying through his attitude that this case was not simply a juvenile crime investigation but a more severe matter approaching the underlying issue.

“The Prime Minister and each minister have instructed us to clarify the correlation between the physical changes in girls who received glass stars two weeks ago and the supernatural abilities witnessed across the country, including this incident.”

“I see…”

From Director Mori’s perspective, it seemed that one of the victims, Yamahara, had inflicted physical violence first before the crime, and the subsequent injury using supernatural abilities also made it difficult to prove intentionality.

Moreover, the suspect is 13 years old, subject to juvenile law.

No matter how he thought about it, he couldn’t imagine the scene of the suspect going to a juvenile detention center originally.

“That means.”

It meant that a sacrificial lamb was needed for research.

The gaze of the Japanese public, bustling with the appearance of magical girls, had changed to be unprecedentedly favorable towards the girls.

Therefore, it was instructed to secretly arrest Busujima Haruko, a magical girl suspect who officially committed a crime, as bringing in innocent magical girls indiscriminately for investigation would risk public opinion.

On the surface, it’s secretly detaining a suspect in a violent incident using supernatural abilities, so even if discovered, the mass media wouldn’t be able to attack.

‘They would attack if they knew what would happen afterward.’

Director Mori, who had been suspicious of the resident reporters at the police station keeping their mouths shut when they usually wouldn’t have missed such a sensational article about a magical girl using supernatural abilities in an impulsive crime, finally felt like he understood the inside story.

“Are you saying that the political and business circles, including the Fujimoto Group, are targeting this suspect?”

“It’s a legal investigation procedure.”

“You mean act as if it’s legal.”

“They don’t want to waste even a moment since Fujimoto’s daughter is involved.”

The group was silent for a moment.

“Proceed.”

“Yes, sir!”

The writing on the paper that Director Mori put down glistened.

[Magical Girl Supernatural Ability Weaponization Plan]

* * *

“Hikari-chan～ Let’s play together～”

“Ahaha, I’m working right now.”

This little one who’s whining while fiddling with the skirt of my waitress uniform is Sato Hana.

She’s one of the regulars I’ve seen most often over the past two years. It’s become a weekend event for her whole family to stop by for a snack while taking a walk together.

The Sato family was the most impressive customer I’ve seen.

That’s because until two weeks ago, Hana was a child who couldn’t use her lower body.

After injuring her nerves while rolling down stairs at the age of 7, she had to rely on a wheelchair.

To comfort Hana, walking around Yokohama and eating a snack at our cafe became a daily routine before returning home.

-Next time, let’s go there.

Hana stared blankly at the sky from her wheelchair, whining about where to be taken next time.

The sight of the Sato couple silently pushing the wheelchair around was particularly impressive among the connections I’ve seen here.

Hana, especially, seemed uncomfortable with the elderly Master and chattered to me whenever I was working. Because of this, the Sato couple thought of me as ‘the big sister who plays well with their daughter’ and took care of me in many ways.

This year, when Hana turned 10, she started walking on her own.

It’s because she became a magical girl.

“Hana-chan~ You shouldn’t trouble big sister!”

“Haha, I’m sorry, Shirogane-san.”

“It’s alright.”

Mr. Sato smiled awkwardly and then said with an unbelievable expression.

“Really… I can’t believe it. Sometimes I think this must be a dream, you know?”

“That’s fortunate.”

“Yes, really… It’s like a miracle I never want to wake up from.”

“…”

The power of magical girls is an unreasonable miracle.

A child who couldn’t walk regains a healthy body and can run around happily like that.

It’s truly a miracle.

From the Sato couple’s perspective, they can’t help but call it a divine miracle.

“Hana-chan~ Do you want to go look at randoseru together this time?”

“Yes! I… I want to buy red and pink ones!”

“Ahaha, you can only buy one~”

Mr. Sato and I stared blankly at that scene for a while.

Perhaps even if someone took away Hana’s star power, she would still be able to walk around like now.

Even the remnants left behind would be an incomparable miracle for the Sato couple.

If only the future society were peaceful.

[Magical Girl Supernatural Ability Weaponization Plan]

The event is where magical girls are treated as strategic assets rather than idols.

‘Not magical girls who share dreams, but starting to act as more advanced humans.’

I endlessly doubted whether events would unfold as in the original work for the past two years, but that anxiety was resolved through the red broadcast.

However, according to the original work, 1-star magical girls like Sato Hana, who are grateful for their ordinariness, will soon face a harsh fate.

‘That’s rather beneficial for me.’

If it proceeds according to the original work, I just need to go with the flow and survive until after the final trial.

Then I can obtain ‘that’ which is the key to returning home…

“Dad! What if the friends at elementary school don’t like me because I’m older?”

“Hahaha, should we bake donuts together and share them if that happens?”

“Then let’s prepare the donut dough together this weekend.”

Hana, who was talking with her parents, suddenly turned to me and said:

“Hikari-chan!”

“Yes?”

“Hikari-chan is different from other big sisters, with white hair and looking like a princess～”

“Mm-hmm.”

“What should I do if friends don’t play with me because I’m different?”

“Hmm…”

I patted Hana’s head and said.

“Well? If you live kindly, everyone will like you.”

“Is that so~”

Actually, it’s a lie.

My school life was without friends ever since the incident in middle school.

“Of course! I had so many friends at school.”

I felt the Master’s incredulous gaze, which meant, ‘You don’t even go to school,’ but I ignored it.

“Yes! I got it. Thank you, Hikari-chan!”

“…”

Should I be happy that things are proceeding according to the original work in front of this smile?

I’m not sure.

Chapter 6 : The Colorless Magical Girl

[Magical Girl Supernatural Ability Weaponization Plan]

The gist of this plan is very simple.

They collect children who are involved in crimes or are marginalized in society due to unavoidable circumstances, such as being orphans, among the magical girls. Then, through harsh secret experiments and training, they confirm the limits of their abilities and use that data to identify the gems that can work for the state and corporations.

In the early stages of ability awakening, there were also hardline opinions to bring in all girls confirmed as magical girls and implement national control along with identity registration, but after the emergence of healing abilities.

They changed direction to indirect control while being mindful of external views.

-I may be the bad guy locking up and beating magical girls, but could you heal my son's serious illness?

-Yes…?

To avoid such awkward situations, they implemented preferential policies and encouraged social participation for magical girls externally.

However, they only educated magical girls actively externally, referring to data brought from 'somewhere'. Later, that 'somewhere' was burned down in the rebellion of 200 experimental girls who were mobilized for harsh experiments.

During the rebellion process, there was a disturbance where girls armed with guns and magic advanced to where Congressman Fujimoto, the chief planner and drafter of this plan, was staying, seeking revenge.

And they were blocked by a single magical girl… a magical girl who had bloomed the fate of [Protection].

Their leader, the magical girl of [Freedom], bloomed belatedly and established a self-governing organization.

-You're people who don't even know where to use your own power.

-We will no longer be bound by anyone! We will raise the 'Flag of Freedom'!

FLAG.

A self-governing organization declared by the 50 surviving girls who could no longer trust the state.

They continued to fight against corporations and the state, and Japan fell into chaos.

People later called this 6-month period of chaos the 'Fujimoto Disturbance'.

Only after the main story began did people realize that the 'Fujimoto Disturbance' made it impossible for <Magical Girl HAZARD> to end happily.

They realized it was their irreversible mistake.

It was a tragic event that announced the beginning of the magical girl era and a monumental event that announced the existence of 'bloomed' magical girls who could use true transformation for the first time.

* * *

"So what?"

“What do you mean ‘so what’? Are you an idiot? Why can’t you understand what I’m saying?”

“You’re not speaking properly.”

In a room at Tokyo National Hospital.

There, Yamashita, a capable police officer who graduated from Tokyo University Law School, didn’t shy away from field work at a prominent local police station to build up achievements and finally was allowed to enter Tokyo Headquarters at a young age… this supreme elite police officer even insulting the gods was feeling despair for the first time.

“In the end, all you saw was that the suspect was in front of your girlfriend and moved her hand, right?”

“She’s a magical girl, a MA-GI-CAL GIRL! This is a real easy problem, you know? Magic! A magic murderer!”

“The question was whether there was any method of magic activation or other abnormal signs.”

“This is why cops… When that bitch raised her hand, it went POW! WHOOSH! WHAM!”

“…Are you an elementary school student?”

“Huh? Don’t look down on me! I’m a first-year high school student; what are you saying!”

Japan is doomed.

No.

Yamashita, rubbing his eyes and coming to his senses, changed the way he asked questions.

“Come to think of it; you said your girlfriend Yamahara-san tried to steal the suspect’s star?”

“Huh? Yeah.”

The delinquent male student, who had been ranting throughout, spoke with a cowed expression for the first time.

“Yacchan was jumping for joy when she first got the star, and I was really happy too…”

The male student scratched his cheek as he continued speaking.

“…I guess Yacchan thought that wasn’t enough, she tried to be a bit greedy, and after that, she didn’t feel so good.”

“Yamahara-san?”

“C, CT? I don’t know what it is, but when they took pictures, the doctor said her head had hardened, so there wasn’t much wrong with where she was hit.”

“Then why do you say she’s lacking energy?”

“I guess she’s depressed because she got hit by someone she usually looked down on.”

“I see.”

Ultimately, it was just a simple story of immature teenagers without any substance.

Tsk

Yamashita clicked his tongue and glanced at Yamahara’s back, lying down dejectedly beyond the delinquent male student.

For Yamahara, who had been living a worthless, delinquent life, being chosen as a magical girl must have felt like becoming Cinderella from a fairy tale.

The stupid Cinderella seemed to be in a bad mood after getting soundly beaten while trying to steal even the glass slipper of the maid next door.

Yamashita chuckled, feeling the irony.

Now that high-ranking officials of the state have shown interest in researching magical girls' supernatural abilities, there's no happy ending for magical girls other than submitting to power.

'That girl doesn't even realize she's fortunate to be treated as a victim.'

The suspect is 13 years old and barely protected by juvenile law.

On top of that, the suspect's side could even be considered for self-defense due to the recognition of impulsive action and urgency, so it seemed like she would be dragged away using this incident as an excuse, which could be seen as a complicated situation.

'If she had turned herself into the police immediately, actively hired a lawyer, and appealed to the media.'

Even then, the media would look to the political and business circles so that it would be hushed up, and she would be imprisoned in a research facility.

Busujima Haruko was trapped in a dead end.

While thinking this, Yamashita's phone started vibrating.

Yamashita answered the phone as he left the room full of idiots.

"Hello. Inspector Oshima?"

[This is Oshima from the scene. We've confirmed sighting information of the suspect. It's near Yokohama.]

* * *

Sato Hana was in a good mood.

There were many reasons for her good mood, but the best reason was the fun of vigorously walking along Yokohama's seaside with her newly healthy legs.

Early summer, past the middle of June.

In the summer where the word ‘hot’ naturally flows from your mouth.

The sea breeze fluttering her hair seemed to lift Sato Hana’s mood right up to the sky.

Clouds scribbled with white crayon on a blue drawing paper.

They shone so vividly that Sato Hana felt like she could run out and grab them.

Maybe magical girls could jump and catch clouds?

Hop

‘Ah, no way.’

Still, Sato Hana wasn’t disappointed. She could do more things with her healthy two legs, so it wasn’t a problem at all if one or two things didn’t work out well.

“Sea breeze wafting~ Seagulls cawing~”

For Sato Hana, who always spent time alone at home, songs were limited to the children’s song tapes she had been listening to since she was 7.

While 10-year-old peers were at the stage of admiring idols with classmates or comically imitating popular songs, Sato Hana’s taste was stuck exactly as it was 3 years ago when her lower body was paralyzed, and she stayed only at home.

“Sun shining brightly~ Clouds flying high~”

But that would be fine, too, as Sato Hana would soon be re-entering elementary school. She might sing popular songs while running around a regular elementary school and getting along with friends.

“Huh?”

In a corner of the walking path that Sato Hana takes every day, a middle school girl was sleeping, covered with newspapers.

“Ugh, the smell…”

It was a middle school girl with messy hair and an indescribable stench coming from her body.

“Mom said not to get close to strange people.”

As Sato Hana recalled her mother’s words and comically sidled past the middle school girl sleeping in the corner of the street, the middle school girl tried to get up unsteadily.

“Mmm… ugh. My head hurts.”

“Oh? Good morning!”

Following her father’s words that you must always greet her before going to sleep or after waking up, Sato Hana greeted the middle school girl loudly.

“Oh… g-good morning?”

“Mm-hmm!”

Haruko was momentarily confused while answering with a dazed head.

“…”

“…”

Busujima Haruko and Sato Hana, whose eyes met, were silent momentarily.

Sato Hana originally had a personality that didn’t easily talk to strangers. Still, thanks to her mother’s education policy, she couldn’t just let it go if someone was doing something wrong.

“Big sister, why are you sleeping on the street?”

“Huh?”

“Mom said that you should sleep at home!”

“Oh… well.”

Although her mind went blank at the fact that someone had discovered her.

Haruko suddenly felt tired.

It was a miserable feeling that she couldn’t bear unless she told someone about her situation.

“I did something bad… so I can’t go home…”

“Big sister, don’t you have a mom?”

“Uuu… d-don’t say bad things…”

From Sato Hana’s perspective, if someone had a person to care for them when they were in trouble, it was undoubtedly their parents.

So the question ‘Don’t you have someone to help you?’ was transformed into childlike speech and popped out, but to Haruko’s ears, it sounded like a piercing rebuke asking, ‘Can you show this state to your parents?’

So Haruko suddenly sat down crying, tears dripping from her eyes.

Haruko, sobbing at the thought of her parents, and Hana, watching blankly, didn’t realize that their surroundings were becoming unusually chaotic.

Clang! Slam!

“Eek?!”

“Huh?”

The sound of a black metal barricade closing was heard from the opposite side of the alley.

Clang! Slam!

A barricade closed on the remaining opposite side as well, completely blocking off the alley used as a walking path in an instant.

“Enter, enter, enter.”

Armed police officers with their bodies wrapped in black clothes and protective gear were slowly approaching from both sides of the alley.

“Eek?!”

Black protective gear.

Helmets with unseen eyes.

And gun barrels pointed fiercely.

They approached moving as one body, each holding a shield and a gun in one hand.

The armed police approaching relentlessly showed not a shred of humanity.

They were pointing their guns at Haruko with just an attitude of doing their job.

Step step step

Seeing Hana standing blankly in front of the police approaching as black masses, Haruko screamed.

“No!”

“Huh?”

“R-Run away!!”

Haruko shouted with anxiety that this child might get arrested along with her if she got involved with her unnecessarily.

‘What to do what to do what to do what to do.’

Snap!

At that moment, a cheerful finger snap echoed through the alley.

“W-What?! Did the suspect escape?! Where did she go?”

“Where did the suspect go?!”

“HQ, please respond!”

The wind cut Haruko’s cheek, and she and the child next to her were flying through the air.

Just a soaring body.

The ground had suddenly switched places with the sky and was spinning round and round.

What was visible through the endlessly shaking view was as clear as the summer sky reflected…

A clean silver color.

An overwhelmingly dazzling silver.

And she spoke while looking at Haruko.

“Phew, what a smell.”

Chapter 7 : Trying to Change the Genre of This Novel

“Hyeonwoo, you should live a good life.”

“What?”

It was a remark my father casually made while working at the repair shop he ran.

I was a middle school student helping my father with his work, organizing the warehouse. I had just returned from arranging new items and boxes brought from the factory when he suddenly started talking.

“If you live a good life, everything returns to you.”

“…”

I was a middle school student at the height of sensitivity… a foolish idiot steeped in paranoia.

So I blurted out words I shouldn’t have said to my father.

“Mr. Kim, who always gets special service because he’s a regular customer, totaled our car while drunk driving.”

…And mom too.

I couldn’t bring myself to say that last part, but perhaps my father knew.

“…”

My father’s face was complex for a moment.

And the next words he said still remain in my memory.

* * *

“…”

A smelly girl was crying loudly in front of me.

Originally, when human crying bursts out in a truly sorrowful and overwhelming situation, the throat gets blocked with snot and hiccups, the expression distorts, and truly animal-like sounds emerge.

This girl crying in front of me was letting out exemplary animal cries.

The three of us, who had come to a safe place after repeatedly teleporting and misleading the police with illusions, were catching our breath for a moment when she suddenly burst into tears.

“She looks like an ugly doll!”

“Hana-chan! Shh!”

I gently covered the mouth of Sato Hana, who was innocently spewing facts.

‘It’s good that I came along after hearing Sato-san’s request.’

The Sato couple’s worries had deepened because Hana had recently become interested in walks and was going further and further.

When Hana injured her nerves, they worked double jobs to earn money for surgery that could be sent to a famous doctor in Europe who had cured lower body paralysis patients. But when Hana’s condition improved, they redirected the saved surgery money to living expenses and school fees, giving them some leeway.

-Except for weekend walks with Hana-chan, we haven’t been able to spend much time with her, so I’m planning to wrap up work this time.

Hoho, Mrs. Sato laughed and asked me to look after Hana so she wouldn’t go too far when walking, saying she would finish up her job as soon as possible and come back.

…And the result was the ugly doll in front of me.

“Um, I think we need to start talking now.”

“Ugh! Hic! Y-Yes!”

An impression that there might be one such person in every class.

The petite female student in the back row, who looked like she might be reading manga, raised her grimy face.

“W-Well, what happened was…”

Listening to her circumstances, it turns out she became a magical girl simultaneously as the delinquent who had been bullying her. Haruko, who had harbored resentment towards her, was finally subdued by the delinquent who tried to take her star away.

Then, recalling the fact that ‘magical girls are sturdy’ that she had seen on the news, she hit her with a brick. When she saw the delinquent’s boyfriend trying to report it, she unconsciously used psychic powers to knock him down.

It’s truly an impressive display of action.

When I was her age, the maximum rebellion I could do was reading dark novels in the library, alienating myself from the world.

But Haruko went as far as to smash someone’s head.

“What about the other side? Did they die?”

“N-No, while I was running away, I secretly went to school and heard that both of them woke up after being unconscious for a day.”

Boldly, even while continuing to flee, she went as far as to gather information from a place where she could check the victims’ condition for situational awareness.

This person’s instinctive actions were all incredibly daring.

“Haah…”

After organizing my thoughts for a moment, I realized that this incident itself was actually relatively low-level compared to its impact.

Of course, hitting someone's head with a blunt object is a violent crime that's hard to defend in any situation.

However, the victim's side was clearly aware that she was a magical girl and had first inflicted violence that violated bodily freedom.

Considering Haruko's age of 13, it would be a juvenile crime case that would end up in family court.

Interviews with guardians and settlements would occur, but it's not a matter serious enough for armed police to swarm in.

'That means this violence incident itself is probably just a pretext… and the goal is to imprison this child in a research facility.'

Even in the original work, it was written that magical girls who hadn't bloomed were imprisoned in state institutions under various pretexts before the plan started.

'I was careless because there was a lot of time left until the [Protection] magical girl bloomed, but I didn't expect to see such signs behind the scenes already…'

Traces of the original work approaching faster than imagined.

"W-What should I tell my mom?"

"You have a mother?"

"Don't say bad things. Why have you both been…"

As soon as I heard the word mother, I instinctively felt a stabbing sensation inside my chest and reflexively asked.

"…"

Listening to Haruko's words, it seems that since the day she committed the incident, she threw away her own phone in an alley to

avoid tracking, didn't use her transit card, and only fled on foot so that she couldn't contact her parents.

What to do.

I could pretend not to know and knock her unconscious to hand her over to the police. But if that happens, the imprisoned Haruko might talk about my information, which is clearly that of a magical girl.

My appearance that I had hidden with illusions in front of the police.

'Of all times, I came straight in my waitress uniform because I said I was going to look after Hana.'

I removed the cafe uniform apron, so the Master's shop name doesn't appear anywhere on the uniform.

Even so, if they compare all the cafes in this area, it wouldn't be too difficult to find a shop where a silver-haired schoolgirl works.

'Even if I had just observed, Hana could have been involved in the arrest process.'

Apparently bored with the story, Sato Hana sat on a bench in front, staring blankly at the sky.

"For now… let's go to my house."

I told the Master I was leaving early.

-Alright. Do that.

And after sending Hana home, I brought Haruko to my house, hiding her with an illusion curtain.

"…"

[Magical Girl Supernatural Ability Weaponization Plan]

Because of this plan, magical girls divide into factions, steal each other's starlight, and cause wars.

Amidst such opposition, the second red broadcast was heard.

[This is your own choice made before the test for human evolution.]

[Each magical girl should prevent the invasion of demons through the path you have chosen for yourself.]

[The power and starlight of magical girls will grow stronger as others' dreams.]

[Those who have taken the starlight of other magical girls will go on the path of struggle; those who have fulfilled the wish of starlight will go towards dreams.]

From here on, all the characters in the original work realize that things have gone wrong.

The first broadcast clearly said [Embrace more starlight to reach evolution.] But only one method was precisely specified: [Absorb the starlight of others.]

'They just didn't notice, but they subtly inserted different meanings between the sentences.'

In fact, this was close to wordplay.

The paragraph [Stars hold the possibility of evolution]. The fact that this should be interpreted as [You can evolve without necessarily fighting, just fulfill conditions on your own.] was really malicious.

And the worst sentence was the last paragraph that said [Face your fate with a cautious attitude].

After the second red broadcast, magical girls realize.

That those who had already absorbed power from other magical girls even once could no longer gain power by other means after the second red broadcast.

The amount of power that could be gained through fighting was too small for all magical girls.

They had entered the path of survival of the fittest surrounding

survival resources to survive the impending doom.

If this were a real-world contract, it would be a matter for the judge to stand up and hit their head with a gavel, but this world itself was aiming for unreasonable misfortune and fate.

A world entangled in trashy fate.

While thinking this, Haruko suddenly opened her mouth.

“Um, can I go to the bathroom?”

“You don’t really need permission for that.”

“I-I don’t know where it is.”

“Go out, and it’s on the left outside the corridor.”

“I-I’ll be right back.”

Haruko, who had left awkwardly, came back awkwardly again 10 minutes later.

“I-I’m back.”

“Why are you so nervous?”

“W-When I see such a noble appearance… I have a personality that gets intimidated.”

“…”

“I-I’m sorry.”

Come to think of it, there was one more thing that was explained in a convoluted way in the red broadcast.

“Busujima-san. Let me see your star for a moment.”

“Eeh?!”

“I’ll just look at it.”

Haruko, who had been trembling like a hamster remembering the incident that led to her being chased, soon fumblingly took out her glass star. Inside her earth-colored star, one light was twinkling.

“Ugh. T-That girl also tried to take mine forcefully.”

“Even if she succeeded, it would have been in vain since the power you can gain through absorption is less than you think.”

“Huh? H-How do you know that?”

“Hup.”

Thinking about absorption, I lightly bumped my glass star, and energy flowed out of Haruko’s earth-colored star and was absorbed.

“Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaah!!!!”

“Oh, so this is how it works.”

“Aaaaaaaaaaaaah!!!!”

And when I tapped the glass star again, energy flowed out of my star and returned to the earth-colored star, restoring it.

“Eeh?!”

[It’s also possible to increase by absorbing others’ stars.]

They never said, ‘it can’t be restored.’

This is how all explanations were maliciously omitted in the red broadcast.

Chapter 8 : Trying to Change the Genre of This Novel

A magical girl with a grand direction of fate is reborn as a true magical girl, blooming two brilliant starlights.

Then, can't a magical girl with only one starlight bloom and use the power of fate?

No.

In the moment of grasping hope that even she herself hadn't realized, she could bloom with just one small starlight.

'Finding something to protect'

That was the identity of the dream that the stars pointed to.

It was also the sparkle that humanity, blinded by power, had let slip from their own hands.

Becoming stronger by defeating others through fighting, not dreams.

It was the end of a world that continued an ugly life by picking up the remnants of dreams left by others.

The only one who realized this on her own in that world was the protagonist, Shikishima Yuki.

But she couldn't change the world.

A world where only the strong who held the possibility of moving the world alone survived.

The protagonist, who survived to the end as the only true magical girl, is recognized as the master of a world where nothing precious

remains.

That was the empty ending of <Magical Girl HAZARD>.

* * *

I only feel unpleasant emotions towards the masterminds of this world who must be laughing behind our backs after setting us loose to fight openly, but they're still out of reach.

'If I just wait quietly for a year until the main story comes…'

This world will flow towards that apocalypse I know.

Thankfully, I had enough capital to take care of myself and made various arrangements besides the cafe part-time job over the past two years. They're not that grand, but just preparing for the apocalypse alone can give me an advantageous position compared to others.

I should rather use that knowledge effectively to survive.

"…"

Suddenly, a question crossed my mind.

Is this really right?

[W-What should I tell my mom?]

[Hikari-chan!]

[It's like a miracle I never want to wake up from.]

[It suits you.]

If I give even a little help, their future could be a bit brighter.

Even if the original work gets slightly twisted, should I really ignore these things?

Two years.

It's been two years since I came to this world.

There were people from whom I received help that I couldn't ignore even if I tried to look past it.

Right now, there's someone in front of me who could return to a normal life with just a little help.

-Become a person who takes the high road.

'Father…'

My reason warned that this could be a decision I might regret for the rest of my life.

'Even so…'

The future of this world is too frightening.

My hands are too small and can protect little.

Even so, there are things I can't ignore.

"Busujima-san."

"Yes?"

"Don't you want to have the power of a true magical girl?"

"Heeeh?! Shirogane-san, what are you saying!"

"This is something only I know. I'll tell you specially."

From the beginning, I thought stories about gods driving humans to their limits and then talking about human nature were trash.

What I saw in <Magical Girl HAZARD> was only the protagonist.

Her words wishing for a bright future and happiness moved my heart.

So, even though no one ever forced responsibility on me.

As someone who knows the original work, I felt that I would greatly regret leaving all this unattended.

With this decision, I felt the guilt in one corner of my heart that I had held for two years disappear.

I told Haruko what to prepare, and after resting for a while, we went into action.

“Master, I don’t think I can come in today.”

[Today too?]

“Yes, I have something I’m preparing these days.”

[I see.]

I turned off the phone, moved by the Master’s generosity in coolly accepting an employee’s absence.

In the corner of the shabby apartment’s empty lot, there was a prismatic space of various colors that scattered all the light that touched it.

Dream World

A unique skill bloomed through the fate of [Deception].

Beyond that light, Busujima Haruko was wandering through a fantasy.

* * *

“Woah…”

Haruko couldn’t help but be amazed at the scene unfolding before her eyes.

The scent of dried paper, the smell of wood, and various manga books with all kinds of titles filled the bookshelves, which were even piled on the floor due to a lack of space.

[Haruko’s Diary], [Haruko’s Meals], [Memories of Nights Haruko Couldn’t Sleep], [The Day Haruko Danced].

She knew that a space organizing her life in the most familiar form

would appear, but this was incredible.

Somehow getting into trouble, somehow running away, somehow being chased by police, and somehow meeting another magical girl, to think she would have such an incredible experience.

Somehow…

How on earth did it come to this?

"…"

She loved manga since she was young.

The sight of pictures breathing life into each panel and creating a story.

She loved it so much.

Yes, Haruko had fallen in love with manga books.

What she realized at some point was that among the numerous panels and countless lines, there was no story about her.

She couldn't become the protagonist of this world.

In the numerous stories, she heard the sound of numerous lives passing by, but none contained Haruko's story.

As Haruko walked between the bookshelves, she suddenly realized that these shelves continued endlessly.

"Huh?"

It was eerie enough that this space, which looked like a familiar manga bookstore, was filled with her own stories, and the sight of infinite bookshelves forcibly expanded began to look increasingly scary.

"Where am I supposed to go…"

Should I call Hikari even now?

She felt that if she called that person with attractive red eyes visible through narrow slits, they would show composure as if knowing everything and solve it effortlessly.

“It’s only been a day since we met.”

Yes, I wanted to become such a special person.

“A special person.”

-Ken-chan! I’ve become a magical girl too! That means I’m a ‘special’ person now, right?

“…”

Come to think of it, that one sentence from Yamahara lit the fire in the warehouse full of gunpowder of hatred.

Gunpowder that, if not ignited, could have become damp over time, and one day when opened again, might have been thought, ‘What, just for this?’ and passed over without much fuss.

People like you.

Are not special.

Shouldn’t be special.

What does it mean to be special?

Anyway, it’s not you.

Because I don’t want to hear stories that aren’t special.

Thud

A manga book fell at Haruko’s feet as she stood there blankly for a moment.

An ordinary cover that she might not have thought to pick up if not for the sound of it falling.

As she carefully picked up the book and turned its pages, she felt

nostalgic.

“Ah.”

There was a time when she tried to draw her own manga.

She had drawn for ten days straight, referring to composition guides, but it was a messy scrawl.

She remembers being too embarrassed to show it to anyone and burning it in a corner of the school incinerator.

At that time, watching her self-made manga book slowly burn away, she ended up crying.

That manga book has now reappeared at this moment.

“Huh?”

She saw something sticking out between the manga books.

A bookmark made of dried maple leaves.

It was a gift she received from her classmates when she won an art contest for drawing manga in elementary school.

[Haruko’s manga is fun!]

[Wow, you really draw well.]

[The pictures Haruko draws are pretty.]

Chatter chatter

[Haruko, aren’t you drawing anymore?]

[I’m curious about the continuation of the manga you showed before!]

“That’s right. There were people who listened to my story.”

My story that’s not special.

People who liked it.

I had forgotten.

An ordinary story.

People who liked my ordinary story.

The real story I want to tell.

Haruko hugged the bookmark and manga book preciously.

Through her gentle smile, a memory she had forgotten for a long time flowed out as tears.

In a changed world.

The second true magical girl to be born was the magical girl of [Fairy Tale].

She wasn't special.

She didn't have a grand fate either.

But still, led by the great colorless starlight.

She found her own tiny starlight.

When Haruko opened her eyes again, what she saw was an empty lot with a shabby apartment and container.

And a silver girl.

The mysterious girl who had guided her.

Hikari smiled at Haruko.

"You succeeded?"

"…Yes. It feels like I remembered something I had forgotten."

"Congratulations, bloomed magical girl. We're comrades now."

“Huh?”

“Busujima-san, let’s do something together.”

“What?!”

Haruko grew increasingly pale as she heard the reason why the police were chasing her and why Hikari had made her bloom. Finally, after hearing the plan to overturn all of this, she started laughing.

That laughter contained three meanings.

Firstly, because the name of the plan was so ridiculous.

Secondly, because it was an exciting plan like something out of a manga.

Thirdly, because Hikari who was telling her this was so cool.

‘Even such a cool person has terrible naming skills.’

Haruko thought it was rather fortunate.

Because each of those aspects added to the colorfulness of the character.

Rather, Hikari’s appearance guiding her with a more human side seemed to shine even brighter.

Chapter 9 : Trying to Change the Genre of This Novel

I watched Haruko use her bloomed ability in the apartment's empty lot together.

Of course, it was basic to put up an illusion curtain on the empty lot so that no one could see.

[Fairy Tale] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Oral Storytelling

"Mr. W-Wolf! Hold the drum and do 10 s-squats!"

Scribble scribble

From the tip of Haruko's unique weapon, an earth-colored feather pen, earth-colored starlight came out like ink, allowing her to leave writing in the air.

The small stories she wrote down in the air. Summoned creatures moved to make those stories a reality.

A 2-meter-sized paper werewolf that looked like it was made by crumpling origami. It repeats awkward squats while holding a drum on both shoulders, making a low howling sound.

A ridiculous posture with the buttocks sticking out far back.

With its crude paper body, it was at its limit to slowly perform such stiff actions.

Clang!

After repeating the squat 10 times, the wolf threw away the drum as

if it had been waiting for this moment, and returned to its original posture of standing with all its strength relaxed.

“N-No! Where do you just s-stand up right after the command ends!”

“Busujima-san, I think the sheep got hit by what the wolf threw?”

“Uwaaaah!! Mr. Pig, heal!!”

Scribble scribble

The command that Haruko hastily scrawled in the air glowed. The hastily written letters were a mess, almost like a scribble, but the summoned creatures understood the command.

When the paper boar touched the crumpled paper sheep that had been hit by the drum with its tusk, the paper sheep returned to its original plump state like a paper balloon.

Even without commands, the summoned creatures tried to act naturally while observing Haruko’s reactions in their own way.

‘It’s not a powerful ability, but summoned creatures that move completely autonomously on their own are quite unique.’

For magical girls who have completed blooming, the attributes of their basic magic also change, influenced by the characteristics of their unique skills. However, types where the basic magic itself changes into summoned creatures were extremely rare even in the original work.

‘The protagonist Shikishima Yuki’s basic magic only went as far as producing flame shapes.’

The magic of the [Fairy Tale] magical girl was a unique form comparable to the level of the [Machine Gun] magical girl who performs all magic with machine guns.

My magic, which has the attribute of illusion magic due to the characteristic of [Deception], can be considered unique, but Haruko’s magic, which even changes its activation conditions, was more and more fascinating the more I looked at it.

‘There weren’t many bloomed magical girls appearing in the original work to begin with.’

Scribble scribble

Haruko, who had been writing in proper handwriting, now changed to writing in cursive, roughly conveying just the intention. Rather, the summoned creatures moved more naturally to match those commands.

An order to properly show each of their abilities once.

The wolf exercises physical strength, taking on the characteristics of psychic power.

When the wolf took a front biceps pose with both arms bent above its head, the drums scattered around the empty lot rose at an incredible speed.

The wolf’s chest swelled up. And from the chest that had swollen to a level comparable to the paper sheep, earth-colored starlight burst out along with its breath.

Whoosh

Clang!

Clang!

Clang!

The drums, wrapped in starlight, were neatly arranged at an even faster speed.

A completely tidied empty lot.

“Busujima-san, then shall we try using Blink again?”

“Hehe! Y-Yes.”

Scribble scribble

Baa-

The paper sheep hopped over and rushed at us with its limbs spread wide in a pose, and with a feeling of being dragged somewhere, we had moved from our position facing the apartment to in front of the shabby metal stairs.

“It’s really unique no matter how many times I see it.”

“Hehe. I-I didn’t know I could use something like this either.”

“It’s an ability that magical girls can originally use.”

Right now, it was much earlier than the prologue mentioned in the original work.

Most magical girls were at a stage where they were just barely starting to handle telekinesis, let alone blooming.

However, if nothing is done, in a few months, the average level of magical girls will rise, and a time will come when bloomed magical girls appear in various mass media.

From then on, it can be considered that the allied forces’ research on magical girls’ abilities will be completed, so it can be said that it’s still a very early stage.

“B-But Shirogane-san, there’s something I’m curious about.”

“What is it?”

“Y-You always commute by subway, right?”

“Yeah.”

“Wouldn’t it be more c-convenient to use teleportation?”

“It’s too much from Shibuya to Yokohama.”

“T-That’s not what I mean…”

Haruko gestured as if appearing in several parts while fiddling with her two fingers and said.

“If you go like this, whoosh! whoosh! whoosh! Y-You could save on

transportation costs and it would be good, right?"

"Busujima-san, you could also always run instead of walking normally, it would save time and be good, right?"

"Ah…"

Haruko twisted her body awkwardly, seeming to have understood the implied meaning of 'it's troublesome.'

I slowly looked at Haruko's bloomed magical girl outfit.

The outfit of another bloomed magical girl I've seen in 2 years, excluding myself, the first bloomed magical girl. It was a modest appearance wearing traditional clothing made of green linen like a European mountain girl, with mountain boots.

In the original work, there were descriptions of bloomed magical girls sometimes having their hair color changed due to the influence of starlight. But Haruko still had her brown-tinged black braided hair.

'It's really a modest appearance.'

After all, being a subculture work, the exposure level and costume concept of bloomed magical girls in the original work were generally designed to match otaku tastes. Among such magical girls, Haruko's modest design that could appear in a Swiss documentary was rather fresh.

'My outfit also has low exposure, although it does reveal the body shape…'

It's a suit that emphasizes the chest in contrast to the thin waist, so anyone can tell it's a woman. Above all, even the pants are so tight they're almost like stockings, so it's closer to a concept costume than a real suit.

When I first bloomed, I wasn't used to such tight-fitting clothes and walked around with my legs crossed, but now I've gotten used to it.

"Hmm, anyway, Busujima-san. Let's stop practice here and I'll be back."

“Ah. Y-Yes!”

I transformed while hearing Haruko’s somewhat brave response.

Colorless starlight.

Brilliant light of various colors enveloping my whole body.

As a magical girl, I am a magician who deceives people.

Even after transforming, the remaining starlight became a white mask covering my face.

The smooth white mask that could appear in a performance like The Phantom of the Opera is a crystallization of [Deception] starlight gathered together. It helped prevent observers from seeing my true nature.

I’ll need to always wear the mask from now on, as it would be troublesome if my face is exposed for what we’re about to do.

* * *

Tokyo Port, where marine goods gather in Tokyo, Japan’s central city.

Here was located the logistics warehouse of Fujimoto Heavy Industries, the core field of the Fujimoto Group.

Japan’s number one city.

Japan’s number one port.

Japan’s number one company.

Among them, the warehouse of Fujimoto Heavy Industries, boasting a scale like the lungs moving the breath of Japan’s economy, boasted an overwhelming size befitting its reputation.

Dozens of huge cranes.

Huge cranes dozens of meters in size that lift and lower hundreds of thousands of goods every day.

People shouting to move logistics and endless vehicles under them.

This place was always full of noise.

It was noise large enough to drown out the voices of a few innocent girls.

“Huff, huff…”

“Test subject number 11, 21 instances of supernatural ability manifestation, ending the 3rd test.”

This could be used as material to send to the Planning Director.

The research facility staff member who muttered this recorded something on the paper in his hand.

The girl who had been exhausted from repeatedly using her supernatural ability until just now looked at such a staff member and shouted.

“Ugh, I exceeded 20 times as promised! Hurry…!”

The research facility staff member in a white gown looked at her with cold eyes and then nodded to one of the guards escorting him.

Thud

What fell to the floor was a single piece of cheap bread.

Bread that can be bought with a single coin at any convenience store.

But for the girl, that bread was so precious.

More precisely, the people who confined her had confined her in an environment where even that bread would be considered precious.

The test subject girl who had been exhausted until just now hastily hugged the bread packet that had fallen at her feet to her chest.

“Then go and stand by.”

“…”

The girl only looked at the bread because she felt miserable.

After confirming that she walked into the darkness, the staff member again recorded something on the paper.

Trudge trudge

It was the seventh day of confinement life in the basement of the warehouse where not a single ray of sunlight entered.

The girl was getting used to this miserable life.

The sound of cranes on the ground that made her head throb.

Confinement life in a closed room assigned as quarters.

Oppression that doesn't even allow comfortable sleep.

Everything had become numb after about a week.

The only thing that wasn't familiar was.

Growl

"…"

For the first three days, they focused on raising her to a set level by repeating training without feeding her anything except water.

'You won't be able to eat if you don't show results here.'

The girls who had been crying out to be released soon succumbed to extreme hunger and cried while hastily swallowing the first meal they had in 3 days.

The 11 test subject magical girls who had been quietly sharing stories of the outside world during break times from the first day to overcome hunger discovered their common points.

-Were you an orphan too?

-Y-You too?!

Damn it.

It's always like this.

This damn world was desperate to squeeze out people like them who had no power.

"Damn it."

The girl looked around the way to her quarters while holding the bread packet.

CCTVs were running here and there in the corridor leading to the quarters, and the only passage was guarded 24 hours a day by armed guards with their eyes wide open.

'The quarters are probably under 24-hour surveillance too.'

Some children had gained the ability to heal someone in addition to the power to move objects through confinement and meaningless repetitive training.

But because the healing ability couldn't solve hunger, the watchers were keeping the girls confined by threatening them with guns and bread.

'Even so, I will definitely get out.'

Freedom.

The moment she muttered that desperate word, a green light flashed in the girl's eyes but soon disappeared.

'It's not time yet.'

At least for now, it seemed like a very distant story.

The girl finished her thoughts and returned to reality. And she walked out weakly, preciously holding the bread to share with her friends who would be holding their hungry stomachs in the quarters.

When she was abandoned at the orphanage, a single flower was

placed on the blanket covering the baby.

That's how she was given the name Ichika.

Later, she would become the leader of FLAG, the rebellion group of magical girls, and a born 2-star.

She would become the [Freedom] magical girl who blooms while fighting against the allied forces led by the [Protection] magical girl.

The corridor Ichika passed through was filled only with silence.

But if she had turned her gaze from the bread packet, she might have seen a faint starlight twinkling and disappearing in a corner of the corridor.

Chapter 10 : Trying to Change the Genre of This Novel

Fujimoto Eiji, son of Chairman Fujimoto, valued blood and name as all heads of the Fujimoto family had done.

Blood means family, name means honor.

As the eldest son of the Fujimoto family, a long-standing noble family and the de facto ruling class of Japan, he had been taught and practiced that these two things could not be compromised under any circumstances.

Money? Money will come in as much as needed as long as the Fujimoto name is maintained.

Even if they were wealthy enough to buy all the land in the Japanese archipelago, once they enter Japanese soil, they bow their heads under the Fujimoto name.

Laws created over hundreds of years.

Loyal subjects willingly throwing themselves into fire pits.

A culture that cannot imagine a different ruler.

Because in front of these, money is ultimately just numbers.

Power.

Power is not something that can be bought with a few pennies.

It is created by those belonging to the name ruling for generations. Therefore, that power must be inherited only by those with Fujimoto blood and name.

Because Japan's power was completed in the name of Fujimoto. That's why Fujimoto Eiji cherished his family.

Rather than a father looking after his family, it was more like preciously polishing parts of a huge machine.

Fujimoto Eiji expressed love in the language he knew.

That language was survival of the fittest.

This principle didn't change even when Fujimoto Eiji's daughter, Fujimoto Sumire, became a magical girl.

When he learned that his daughter was a magical girl, he conceived facilities to capture and experiment on magical girls to serve as lab rats instead of his precious daughter.

When he learned that magical girls use supernatural abilities, he calculated what needed to be extracted from the lab rats.

When he learned that the fruit was more valuable than expected, he ordered his subordinates to bring in more lab rats.

There was no hesitation because everything would be used under the name of his daughter and Fujimoto.

* * *

"Test subject number 2, 42 instances of supernatural ability manifestation, ending the 4th test."

"…"

"…It's increased almost fourfold. And for five of them at that."

Until just three days ago, all test subjects except number 11 couldn't exceed 10 instances, so they were considering administering stimulants.

This result could be considered somewhat encouraging because they had received complaints from the Planning Director of the Fujimoto Group's Strategic Planning Team that there were too few research

performance samples.

‘The subjects who used to pant after experiments now don’t even sweat.’

As a research staff member, he thought it was an unusually rapid change for the result of conducting experiments on only 11 test subjects for a week, but he just mechanically repeated the experiments, adding his personal opinion that no prejudice was necessary in the uncharted field of supernatural abilities.

‘If supernatural abilities are the kind of power that increases with just such repetitive training, I might need to reconsider the request for additional test subject samples for drug experiments.’

Glance

The research staff member looked at the list of 389 potential samples on his PC.

He had requested a generous number because he anticipated experiments with high consumption of test subjects, as there was nothing to refer to from any existing human experiment cases regarding supernatural abilities.

‘At the current rate of progress, rapid changes are detected with simple repetitive training alone. Hold off on drugs for now.’

Thud

Putting down the research record on the table, the research staff member threw a single bread to the test subject girl as always.

“Not bad. Go back and call number 3.”

“…”

The test subject girl carefully held the bread packet and turned to walk into the only corridor leading back to the quarters.

‘She always took it away hastily, drooling like a beast, has she despaired of the situation?’

Because these were supernatural ability users showing bizarrely superior physical abilities compared to ordinary people, it was clear that the cost of resources used in research would increase if they refused to cooperate with experiments.

So as soon as they started full-scale experiments, they implemented restricted feeding to subdue their spirit.

‘They’ve completely changed into machines in just 3 days.’

Thinking that even just a few days of restricted feeding worked very well on teenage girls with weak mental resistance, the research staff member prepared for the next experiment.

* * *

The quarters smelled musty because they had crammed in girls who couldn’t wash well.

The noise from the logistics warehouse right above was heard 24 hours a day, and it was a space that was hard to call comfortable even as a white lie. But in the cold silence that enveloped the place where whispers could always be heard due to the bond formed among the girls over the past week.

“…”

“…”

“…”

Even the girls who usually led the atmosphere, including Ichika, kept their usually chattering mouths firmly shut and watched their surroundings.

A girl with orange-dyed hair finally opened her mouth with difficulty.

“Boss. It’s a-awkward.”

“Be quiet, Kyoko.”

Excluding one girl who had gone out for experiments on rotation, there were a total of 10 people in the quarters, divided exactly 5:5, sitting facing each other at both ends of the room.

Finally, as if she couldn't bear it anymore, Kyoko stood up abruptly, pointing at the girls on the opposite side.

"Who on earth are you! Shouldn't you at least tell us that much!"

"Kyoko! Sit down! They're watching!"

"Eek?!"

Ichika hurriedly checked all the CCTVs installed in all four corners of the room. Her ponytail swayed like a dog's tail as she kept anxiously looking at the places where cameras were attached.

"If they're quiet even when we secretly eat, isn't it okay?"

"…"

"…I'm sorry."

In fact, there had been no reaction even though they had hastily eaten convenience store lunch boxes brought from outside until yesterday. It was unlike those guys who were solidifying the method of controlling the girls' behavior through food as if it were standard practice.

"Are you sure Neo, Yumi, Tomoko, Momoe, and Yuzuki are doing well?"

"Haah. How many times are you going to ask?"

The 'one' with Neo's face finally answered.

"We've eaten together for several meals, isn't it time to trust us by now?"

"You didn't even touch the food."

"I can eat 'outside' so it doesn't matter."

“…”

“Do you know how much I’ve spent buying your lunch boxes every time?”

“It’s because we’ve been through a lot.”

Ichika had honestly almost resolved her doubts about the other party. But thinking of the true form of the fox-eyed woman using strange abilities and the other 10 girls who followed her calling her boss, she maintained her suspicion out of a sense of responsibility.

“It’s good to have a sense of responsibility.”

“Don’t change the subject.”

“I haven’t changed it, so stop being prickly.”

“…”

“There are too many guards around the facility, so I’m looking around with another clone to see how we should do this.”

Ichika spoke a thought that suddenly occurred to her.

“Is it difficult to get us out that way too?”

“You don’t think getting one person out and all of us rushing out are the same, do you?”

“I thought you could do it.”

“The maximum I can switch out this way is 5 people. The rest need to be used for other things.”

“I see.”

Ichika closed her eyes again, leaning back against the wall.

“If… if we all get out safely. I’ll never forget this favor.”

“I’ll remember that promise.”

“…”

Kyoko quietly sat down, feeling like something had been concluded without her knowing.

The second-in-command of the test subject magical girls had her own sense of awareness.

* * *

Having heard that the conversation inside the quarters had concluded for now, I focused my consciousness outside again.

Although I had practiced repeatedly through training to observe through clones while detached from the real world.

It was still difficult to execute multiple tasks precisely at once.

It felt like watching 6 stock charts in real-time while having a game open on the remaining monitor.

The 6 clones that weren’t the main ones I was controlling dealt with things autonomously to some extent, but in extreme situations, I had to concentrate my consciousness to control them.

‘It seems I’m just not used to this ability. Why did I become able to use illusion magic?’

I had hidden the girls I had secretly taken out through substitution in my apartment room and told them not to come out. Just in case, I asked Haruko to keep watch, so I could be at ease about that for now.

‘There were fewer test subjects than I thought.’

Whether it hadn’t expanded to full-scale experiments yet, the total number of test subject girls was 11.

They were all children whose supernatural abilities were discovered in real-time because they lived in orphanages or facilities without personal space. If they had guardians, they wouldn’t have been kidnapped like this even if they were seen using basic magic.

From the point they realized there were limitations to the scale of experiments with just these girls, they must have been planning to gradually increase the number of test subjects.

In fact, among the reports I secretly checked, there was mention of expanding the pool of test subject candidates.

‘Haruko’s name was also included in the expanded list of sample candidates.’

Because research results were poor with just repetitive training experiments, they forcibly induce an awakened state using drugs or accelerate metabolism to the brink of death to draw out unconscious manifestation.

Looking at the research plan that clearly aims to increase victims in earnest made my teeth chatter.

‘So that’s why hundreds died and Ichika went crazy.’

In my previous life, it was described in just a few lines of background explanation, but actually facing the test subject girls made me feel devastated.

Whoosh

I stood on top of an 81-meter-high container crane overlooking the Fujimoto Heavy Industries logistics warehouse and suddenly turned my head to the sea breeze.

A strong, humid wind hit my face. The horizon where the sunset was beginning and fragments of light scattered reflected on the water were visible.

Light.

Reflection.

“Oh.”

A flashy illusion with a concept that’s hard to guess the ability.

If I show an illusion using fireworks, it might work.

I suddenly remembered that there were fireworks among the items I had gathered in preparation for the apocalypse.

It’s a bit difficult to go from Tokyo Port to Shibuya and back, but I have no choice.

Chapter 11 : Trying to Change the Genre of This Novel

Warehouse No. 5 of Fujimoto Heavy Industries was empty.

As the underground warehouse connected to it had been hastily converted into a research facility to prevent security leaks, they strictly controlled employees' access except for a minimal number of personnel and guards, using the excuse that it was under repair externally.

"I'm here to change shifts."

"Oh, there's nothing unusual."

"Yes, sir!"

Inside the huge space that was used to store equipment dozens of meters in size for heavy machinery or ships.

Employees of Fujimoto Security, who handle tasks that can't be shown externally and guarding for the Fujimoto Group, were maintaining iron-clad security concentrated near the passage leading to the underground warehouse.

Flicker

Flicker

"…"

The evening glow had already faded and it had become completely dark, and they had cut off the connection to the central power plant under the pretext of repairs. Inside the warehouse, only temporary lighting was on.

“Is it flickering because of the wind?”

“Probably.”

Flicker

Flicker

Because it was a facility hastily modified in a short period and equipment brought in secretly avoiding official routes, there were quite a few defective items.

“Oh, this one’s completely gone out.”

“HQ, this is SP-3 team. The lights went out due to the wind. Please replace.”

[Received, stand by.]

“Roger.”

The guard member put the radio back on his waist and turned on the flashlight issued to special security teams.

Silver.

A girl wearing a mask.

The moment he turned on the flashlight, a silver-haired girl appeared in front of him.

“What?!”

The guard member hurriedly drew the pistol from his waist and fired.

Bang bang!

* * *

Bang bang-

“Mmm…!”

“Whoa! Isn’t that gunfire?”

As the battle was happening right in front of the entrance, it was faintly audible even in the girls’ quarters located in the farthest corner of the underground research facility.

“Kyoko, then let’s slowly get out now.”

“Understood, boss!”

As all the girls in the room stood up at once, a voice flowed from the speaker installed on the ceiling of the quarters.

[Stop! What are you doing! Sit down right now!]

[One person? Only one person broke in?]

[Find out which company they’re from!]

Perhaps because the situation control room was also in disarray due to the battle that had just occurred, the broadcast of the controller in charge of monitoring the quarters was mixed with shouting voices and various noises in a chaotic atmosphere.

“Eat this!”

Kyoko raised her fist and waved it at each of the four cameras in the quarters. She grinned, showing her canine teeth, seemingly happy about finally getting out.

“Kyoko! Stop doing useless things and come out!”

“Ah, yes…”

“Everyone, I’ll help you. Let’s get out quickly!”

“Yes! Boss!”

“Th-Thank you, boss.”

Kyoko, who had been laughing until just now, seemed to have regained her sense of reality at Ichika’s words and started to feel tense.

Gulp

After forcibly shaking off her anxiety.

They ran out.

* * *

As I confirmed that the girls who had been test subjects were moving, I detached my consciousness again and moved it to the clone fighting at the main entrance.

Bang bang bang bang bang!

The light illuminating the dark warehouse flickered at the muzzle of the gun, blinking in time with the gunshots.

The urgent footsteps of the guard members heard as the light passes.

‘I don’t want to kill ordinary people who are just following orders.’

Although I attacked with the lights off, apart from knocking out one guard member with my fist at first, there was no gain. I tried hand-to-hand combat, thinking that if I used psychic power on an ordinary person, I might rip their neck off like a cork…

Bang bang bang bang bang!

…but the remaining 5 members, having confirmed that one was attacked, all spread out and opened fire at once.

‘I hesitated to drive them out with illusions because it seemed like I couldn’t control the variables.’

It seems this was rather a bad move. Thinking this, I spread out a wide and solid rainbow-colored light like a shield with my hand.

Bang bang bang bang bang!

Clink

Bullets flattened and fell, blocked by the curtain. While blocking the bullets with the curtain, I ran towards the nearest member.

Tap

The distance between me and the member closing instantly as I lightly kicked off the ground.

Panicked breathing.

Trembling eyes.

“Ugh!”

The member, having confirmed that bullets were useless against the curtain emitting light like a prism, seemed to aim for my posture to collapse, rushing in with his shoulder thrust forward.

“Uwaah!”

Even as the well-trained giant tackled me, my sharpened senses showed the current situation as clearly as if watching in slow motion.

Whoosh

I even heard the sound of the air shaking due to the giant flying to grab me.

Around the giant’s approaching limbs, I could see others aiming their guns at me cautiously.

“It’s useless!”

“Ugh!”

I shook off the guard member with minimal steps as I passed by, and my surroundings became clear again.

The guard member passing by futilely.

Beyond him, other members who had secured cover.

Before they could fire, I put an illusion curtain that looked like a fishbowl over their faces. The guard members, surrounded by spherical curtains like astronauts, struggled to take them off.

“Aah! What is this!”

“It won’t come off!”

“Check! Check them!”

Bang bang bang bang bang!

The members who had fallen into temporary panic due to their vision being blocked by an unknown force fired their bullets as much as they could.

Clink

In the invisible field of view.

Bullets that succeeded in hitting by chance nonetheless.

But they fell as flattened lead pieces, blocked by the curtain.

Click! Click! Click!

When I heard the sound of all the bullets dropping, I approached each of the members trying to reload instinctively despite losing their vision and pushed them.

“Hah?!”

“Damn it!!”

The members who instinctively flailed their arms as their posture collapsed and ended up dropping their magazines cursed.

Clatter!

The members who were anxious to pick up the magazines that fell with a heavy sound due to the live ammunition inside soon gave up on firing and rushed in blindly, relying on footsteps.

“Whoa?! The magazine!!”

“Bullets are useless! Tackle!”

“Block!”

“Block!!”

The members rushing in all at once like detectives trying to arrest a criminal, giving up on firing.

I cast Blink while watching them.

Flash!

The distance closed instantly again.

As I barely slipped through the shadow created under the members, they all tumbled down at once, and I lightly slapped each of them once with my palm.

Slap

“Ugh?!”

“Damn it!”

“Uuu…”

…It seems I failed to control my strength a bit, as they were trembling all over in pain and unable to move.

Even with the transcendental physical abilities and reflexes of a 3-star magical girl, it took longer than expected to subdue non-lethally using my ability. However, I could confuse the enemies with irregular ability use and illusions.

Even if I tried to lure them with illusions, it was obvious that the guards at the entrance wouldn’t move.

Unable to think of a subject that would make them all move at once seeing an illusion, I rushed in hastily, but to think this would be a worse move.

‘No, the real problem is my immaturity in not being able to boldly execute methods to subdue the enemy…’

I thought I had been prepared to kill since the day I came to this world.

But when it came to indiscriminately massacring guards who weren't much of a threat, I felt reluctant. Thanks to that, this meaningless battle became longer than expected.

'On top of that, trying to control 7 clones simultaneously is driving me crazy. I can't even pay attention to surveillance cameras.'

It felt like a truly evil level of difficulty to grasp the situation while watching 6 fluctuating stock charts, when it would be insufficient even sitting down properly and concentrating.

Taking advantage of the momentary lull in the fight, I detached my consciousness to check the situation of the clones.

Ichika's group was flustered when the guard blocking the stairs fired his gun.

Bang bang bang bang bang!

Clink

But it was blocked by the curtain spread by one of my clones. After that, Ichika boldly used psychic power towards the guard member who fired the gun, and the guard who lost his balance rolled down the stairs.

Whenever they encountered guard members in the corridor, one of my clones would spread a curtain and Ichika would subdue them.

Sometimes through movements applying martial arts techniques.

Sometimes by jumping off the wall and distracting their attention.

That's how they subdued their opponents and advanced.

'They fight well.'

For her, the guard members were enemies she had to confront desperately, so her response was bold and swift. Rather, because the

battles ended quickly due to such bold responses, they could reduce casualties more.

"…"

Bold action is better than clumsy hesitation.

That was the lesson I learned from my first fight.

Lamenting my own immaturity, I moved my consciousness to another side.

The side preparing to draw attention when taking everyone out of the warehouse.

Far away, about hundreds of meters outside, dozens of guard members armed with submachine guns were boarding vehicles and rushing at full speed from what appeared to be the security headquarters.

'Now it's about time to leave.'

I confiscated pistols from the guard members fallen on the floor. Then I threw them away while waiting for Ichika's group to come up the stairs.

Tap tap tap—

"Huff… huff…"

"Welcome."

"Huff. Where is this?"

"Tokyo Port. I'll explain the details later. Let's get out of here first."

"Alright. Let's go!"

* * *

It was the first time in Ichika's life that she had run at full speed for tens of minutes without stopping once.

The huge port that seemed endless no matter how much they ran.

Dozens of giant cranes.

The night view of Tokyo visible in the distance.

Only after crossing in front of the logistics warehouse and seeing the sign that said Fujimoto could Ichika finally know who had confined her group.

'Fujimoto…!'

It was only about ten days, but the memory of starving 11 girls while squeezing their strength to the limit in turns seemed like something she would never forget.

Now, all that was left was to escape with her comrades.

It was around the time Ichika was thinking that.

Thump! Thump! Thump!

Bang!

"Ugh?!"

"Whoa!"

"Eek!"

Flash.

The blinding light of searchlights that seemed to blind their eyes.

All the searchlights surrounding Warehouse No. 5, which had been dark until just now, emitted light at once and moved around before shooting light toward Ichika's group.

Rrrrrrrrrring—

A chilling, high-pitched alarm sound that seemed to tear their ears.

All the searchlights, along with the alarm sound, allowed every move

of Ichika's group to be watched. At the same time, the on-site guards who hadn't been able to find Ichika's group in the darkness all rushed towards them at once.

Screech!

"HQ support team!"

"Catch them!"

"Subdue them!!"

"Permission to fire granted!!"

Rattle rattle

Far away, about 100 meters outside, armed guard members with the Fujimoto Security mark from over 10 black trucks that could be seen were gradually surrounding and rushing towards Ichika's group.

"Hey! What are we going to do now!"

"This is bad!!"

While secretly despairing, Ichika thought the fox-eyed girl who had suggested the escape would have a way.

She believed that a perfect girl who could find out the location of the research facility that even she didn't know, and use abilities on a different level from themselves, would surely find a way.

"Rather than using that… fireworks are no longer needed. The clones won't be visible because of the light…"

Through the noise made by those trying to capture them at any moment.

The fox-eyed girl shouted to Ichika.

"From now on, I'm going to release my clones, so trust me and keep going! You have to look only at the ground!"

"What?!"

Swoosh

The fox-eyed girl she had been talking to until just now and the clones disguised as comrades disappeared like a dream. She had asked to trust her, but suddenly doing this made anxiety rush in.

“Wh-What should we do, boss?!”

“Run!! There’s no other way!! Run!!”

Ichika ran out just like that.

Light.

Noise.

Shouting.

When everything was dizzily tangled

And they were caught up to the point where even the expressions of the guard members could be seen.

[Deception] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Dream World

Giant prism spheres were floating in the sky.

A power that distorts reality.

A grand illusion.

“Wh-What on earth is that?!”

“What is that?!”

Spheres that looked over 5 meters in diameter slowly descended from the sky. And they began to emit rainbow-colored light sources while scattering the light from the searchlights.

Light.

Light fills their vision.

“Aaaagh!!! My eyes!!!”

“I-I can’t see!!”

“Shoot! Shoot! Just shoot!!”

Bang bang bang bang bang!

Rattle rattle rattle!!

Shadows dance.

Flames sing.

People shout.

In the harbor at night.

There, lights of myriad colors showed off their respective colors, confusing human perception.

And the silver girl was smiling.

“HQ! HQ! Cut off the power plant!! Just cut it off without talking back!!!”

Darkness.

The rainbow-colored lights that had been there until just now disappeared simultaneously

And the world was plunged into darkness.

“The fireworks didn’t go to waste!”

The girl shouted.

And light rising again.

A star made of flames.

The prison of light started again.

Whooosh-!

Bang-!

The night sea embroidered with hot stars.

Lights spreading through glass beads.

People dancing amidst dizzying lights.

A girl deceiving everyone’s vision.

Ichika felt like she would never forget this scene for the rest of her life.

Chapter 12 : "Grandmother is Still Alive"

“Hey, are you sleeping?”

“…”

Even after waking up, I was inwardly breaking out in a cold sweat while reviewing the last fight.

The fight at the main entrance was essentially nothing more than desperately holding out with the raw physical specs of a 3-star magical girl and then hastily finishing with illusions.

“From your breathing, it sounds like you’re awake.”

“…”

I should have lured them out of the warehouse or disarmed them through meticulously prepared illusion magic. But being in a hurry, I recklessly charged in relying only on physical specs.

I might have been distracted controlling the clones, but to choose the worst among bad moves.

‘Even after the gun was fired, I couldn’t make any bold moves.’

The preparation was insufficient, the ideas were poor, and above all, it was reckless.

‘Even a 1-star magical girl can rampage on the battlefield if they go all out, what on earth was I doing?’

I was wielding a sword that could cut anything while simultaneously not being prepared to hurt anyone.

‘I should have subdued them immediately even at the risk of causing serious injuries.’

Boldness.

Decisiveness.

These were absent in me.

Ichika subdued more than 6 guard members she encountered in the corridor by herself, using the terrain.

Divide and conquer.

Swift and accurate.

Once Ichika realized she had a clone dedicated to defense attached to her, she broke through by performing her role solely through attacks.

While I was barely grappling with 5 guard members, she had taken care of her comrades and safely come up from tens of meters underground.

‘Let’s be honest, I responded half-heartedly because I was afraid of hurting people.’

No matter how many imaginations and resolutions to fight I made in my mind, it was so different from actually experiencing it.

In the end, we escaped safely, but it was too dangerous and close.

To think I thought I could overcome the apocalypse with such a half-hearted attitude.

“I can’t tell if you’re sleeping with your eyes open or not.”

“I was lying down because I felt pathetic about myself.”

“Oh, so you were awake.”

“How are the others?”

“They’re still sleeping, they’ve only been taking light naps for ten

days not knowing when they'd be called."

They must have been like that because of rapidly conducting experiments for 24 hours to produce immediate results.

The rescued girls were sleeping, making tired breathing sounds around us.

"I see."

"Why are you so depressed?"

"No matter how chaotic it was, I should have made better decisions when fighting."

"Anyway, isn't it fine as long as no one got hurt and it ended well?"

"I had the wrong mindset, I should have done better."

Heh. Ichika let out a deflated laugh with her husky voice.

She had a sensitive and sharp impression inside the experimental facility, but as soon as she escaped from the dangerous place, she changed to an easygoing personality that gave a relaxed laugh.

"Then can't you just do better next time?"

"…"

"You act all composed as if you know everything with your terrifying abilities, but you have this cute side too."

"…"

"Anyway, thank you, really."

Tap tap

Ichika expressed her gratitude while touching my shoulder.

Rough hands.

I was a bit surprised by Ichika's hands, which had skin like stones.

‘Was she doing some kind of exercise before being captured?’

In the end, we succeeded in escaping that night.

Taking advantage of the gap left by the security team thrown into confusion by my unique skill, we changed into clothes hidden in the darkness. Then we changed all our appearances with illusion magic and returned to Shibuya.

Haruko and the other 5 girls waiting at the apartment were awake until past 3 AM when we returned, worried about us.

-Boss, welcome back!

-Everyone’s okay!

Because we had a tiring night, we were sprawled out sleeping in my room until 1 PM the next day.

The sight of a 6-tatami one-room apartment packed with 13 girls.

It looked like the aftermath of a university MT where a senior who drinks well had passed through.

Of course, the difference is that then they were all men, and now they’re beautiful girls.

‘It’s fortunate I didn’t buy furniture and such for the past 2 years.’

Haruko, pushed to the opposite wall by the wall of beautiful girls, was groaning in distress.

“Hey, Shirogane.”

“What?”

“Want to go out for a bit?”

“Sure, why not.”

Ichika and I quietly got up and went out, avoiding the girls sleeping in disarray like stepping stones.

As soon as we came out, we washed our faces at the tap and cast disguise magic on our faces.

Ichika was still in the loose-fit t-shirt and blue jeans she had worn all night.

It was an outfit that suited Ichika, who had the impression of a wild girl, very well.

“So what are you going to do now?”

“Is that why you wanted to go out?”

“There’s no need to unnecessarily complicate the feelings of the kids sleeping.”

“My feelings are still complicated though.”

“That’s the leader’s responsibility, you know.”

What leader.

It seemed like Ichika was subtly forcing the role of leader on me, so I changed the subject.

“Let’s eat something first and then talk.”

“That sounds good.”

Tap tap

Ichika, who was grinning while patting my chest, suddenly looked flustered.

Her gaze was fixed on my chest.

They looked particularly prominent in the shade under the hot sun.

Ichika, who had been staring for a while at the two hills she hadn’t noticed in the urgent situation, muttered in a dazed voice.

“They really are big when seen in bright light. What do you eat to make them grow like that?”

“Oh, come on.”

After exchanging these silly words, we went out and had a meal at a family restaurant.

The news playing in the corner of the restaurant mentioned last night’s incident.

The incident at the Fujimoto Heavy Industries logistics center was surprisingly quietly buried.

-It was an accident caused by fireworks that were stacked for rehearsing an event going off.

-I see.

If the spokesperson for the Fujimoto Group says so, then that’s how it is.

Because there were no anti-social reporters who questioned this obvious logic, the news moved on to the next breaking news after the Fujimoto Group spokesperson went back into the headquarters after leaving one statement.

“Wow, it’s really simple.”

“Well, everyone probably knows there’s something more to it.”

“You mean they’re all keeping their heads down, watching the Fujimoto elders’ reactions.”

Ichika poked at the pancakes of the family restaurant with her fork as if displeased.

Seeing that, I drank the black coffee placed in front of me and read the newspaper I had picked up while passing by the subway station earlier.

‘It’s surprisingly quiet.’

Ichika and I were having a late lunch far from Shibuya where the apartment is, just in case.

We had looked at numerous newspapers and news on our way here, but no one mentioned what happened at the Fujimoto Heavy Industries logistics center last night.

“So?”

“Hm?”

“What are you going to do now, leader?”

“Wait, why am I the leader?”

“If you rescued us, take responsibility yourself.”

Ichika spoke in a playful tone, but I could feel the sincerity underneath, which made me perplexed.

“More than that, why did you rescue us and what are we going to do from now on, leader? It’s about time you told us.”

“…”

After staring for a while at Ichika, who was grinning and enjoying my reaction, I sighed.

I started from how Haruko and I got involved, then how I accidentally learned about the inner workings of what the Fujimoto Group was trying to do, and that the Fujimoto Group’s perception of magical girls was fundamentally wrong from the premise.

“Well, I heard it too when I was at the orphanage, but didn’t the ‘Red Broadcast’ tell us to take from each other?”

“That’s true.”

Ichika scratched her head with the fork she had in her mouth, recalling that memory.

“That’s really dirty.”

“What does it matter? Anyway, the researcher at the facility was trying to use us like soldiers or something.”

“Soldiers?”

“Yeah. Because Fujimoto’s daughter is a magical girl, we were supposed to be like textbooks and fertilizer and royal guards for her to get stronger.”

In the original work, they probably used the stars of children who were no longer useful as ‘fertilizer’ with drugs.

“It’s winner-takes-all, isn’t it? Resources are limited, and those who have them, want to take all the good stuff.”

“…”

Ichika looked outside the family restaurant for a moment.

People were all passing by sweating in the hot early summer weather.

People passing by busily, indifferent to each other.

“If they’re going to take, orphans like us with no parents are the easiest targets first.”

“…What I want to say is, that resource isn’t particularly limited.”

Ichika turned back to me, seemingly surprised by my words.

* * *

“Branch Manager Takahashi.”

“Yes! Congressman!”

“Branch Manager Takahashi.”

“Yes! Family Head!”

“Branch Manager Takahashi.”

“…”

Takahashi, the branch manager of Fujimoto Security’s logistics center, was in a miserable state.

‘No, I’ll probably die soon.’

Fujimoto Security, one of the two swords held by the Fujimoto family.

They are composed of those who are loyal only to the family head among the private soldiers loyal to the Fujimoto family in the past.

Those trusted enough to be allowed to stand guard near the family head.

They are a group of loyalists who have left legendary anecdotes, such as standing in front of the door for three days and nights or bravely jumping into a burning mansion with just one order from the family head.

‘In exchange for the honor of being able to assist the family head closely, failures are not forgiven.’

The penthouse on the roof of the Fujimoto headquarters had a Japanese traditional house placed on a vast building and created a park with real soil and a lake.

There was only a chilling silence there.

“It has been an honor to serve you until now.”

“…”

Two women followed behind Takahashi, who bowed while sitting and then left.

One of the two swords owned by the Fujimoto family exists to deal with external threats.

The other exists to deal with traitors.

And a sword that fails to perform its role was a betrayal to its master.

Even if it was an unreasonable order or something beyond one’s ability.

No kind of failure could be tolerated for executives of Fujimoto Security who knew many of Fujimoto's secrets and weaknesses.

Because what they protected was the ruler of Japan.

"…"

Fujimoto Eiji didn't even give a glance until the end.

What he was looking at was a single photograph.

A magical girl faintly captured on the body cam of a Fujimoto Security employee.

Fujimoto Eiji wanted to understand the unidentified ability she handled, the power presumed to be supernatural ability.

He was also looking forward to the capabilities of an opponent who had so boldly challenged Fujimoto.

'There was a talent worth using as a touchstone.'

He spoke while handing the photo to a petite girl standing behind him.

"Kaede."

"Yes, Elder."

"If you find this person, cut them down."

"Yes, Elder."

The girl Kaede, who answered without a moment's hesitation.

Inside her deep green glass star, two lights were twinkling.

Chapter 13 : "Grandmother is Still Alive"

The cause of all the events in the original work boils down to ‘not knowing.’

They didn’t know that magical girls’ power could develop through their own dreams.

They didn’t know why magical girls existed.

So they coveted each other’s power through taking.

So they ruthlessly consumed girls in meaningless ways.

The social situation until the appearance of the first bloomed magical girl was quite a sight.

Just to gain starlight that could perform a few more basic magic spells, the alliance led by the Fujimoto Group sorted out girls who would become fertilizer and girls who would become their army.

After the blooming of the born 2-star [Protection] magical girl.

Girls like Ichika, who had talent even among born 2-stars, showed strong reactions to fate, so they achieved blooming in the process of fighting. But the atmosphere of society that already treated magical girls as a resource was already irreversible.

Magical girls conforming to the existing order.

They were worshipped as beautiful idols of broadcast programs.

As miracle girls who exerted healing abilities.

But behind the scenes, sacrifices of other magical girls were made for

competition between companies to possess magical girls and for qualitative improvement.

It was truly a ‘war’.

* * *

“Oh, this is more comfortable than I thought?”

“It suits you, Ichika.”

Ichika’s bloomed magical girl outfit was a white sailor uniform so old-fashioned it reminded one of the Showa era.

A length that clearly revealed her sharply defined abs.

A large green ribbon at the neck.

The edges of the clothes were worn and tattered, giving a rough impression despite the feminine outfit.

Struggle

The two characters engraved on the green special attack uniform draped over Ichika’s shoulders seemed to flow with the spirit of fighting to win, like a tiger’s stripes.

Rustle

A ponytail roughly fluttering in the wind over the special attack uniform.

A confident smile and burning eyes.

Seeing that imposing figure, I could understand why the girls who had been test subjects followed Ichika as their leader. Of course, Ichika’s responsible personality must have played a part too.

“Wooow! The boss looks cool!”

“Invincible, I say!”

“We failed, but the boss succeeded right away.”

Unfortunately, except for Kyoko, the other 1-star magical girls couldn't find clues to blooming even in the mental world. Even Kyoko woke up failing in the end, stuck in an ambiguous state of just about to grasp something.

"I-I took a really long time, but you succeeded so quickly!"

"Haha, thank you."

In Haruko's case, she was successful in blooming as she belonged to those who had forgotten the dream they already knew. Nevertheless, Ichika succeeded in finding clues to blooming faster than her.

Ichika, who was smiling confidently, rubbed her nose with a sniff.

"I didn't expect a place I saw briefly when I was young to appear."

In her 7th year of growing up in an orphanage.

On a field trip with everyone from the orphanage, she happened to see a punching machine.

Ichika said to the supervising care teacher,

-Teacher! Me! I want to try that!

-No. The other children are already on the bus, aren't they?

That punching machine, gradually getting farther away outside the bus window as she looked back regretfully while holding the teacher's hand.

It became the primal image of the concept of 'freedom' in Ichika's unconscious. This time, she finally ran out of the bus and threw a punch at the punching machine.

As she threw her punch with all her might, green light burned from her fist and blooming occurred.

"Somehow, now that I've become like this, things that were vague seem to be becoming clearer?"

[Freedom] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Fighting Instinct

Woong-!

"Huh…?!"

"Ughk…"

"Eek?!"

As green energy enveloped Ichika's entire body, the atmosphere of the apartment's empty lot changed instantly.

Trees trembled and buildings vibrated, and every cell in the body began to warn that this was a battlefield. The energy that started to fluctuate expanded wider and wider, swallowing everything like a storm.

"Oops, just about this much."

The range of the energy that seemed like it would expand endlessly hesitated for a moment, then shrank again, reducing to just enough to envelop me and Ichika.

Green glowing eyes.

"Shirogane, about what you said earlier."

"Fujimoto? Or the stars?"

"No, the fighting part. I think I can show you if we spar once."

Thud—

Ichika made a heavy sound as she brought her fists together and smiled.

A predatory smile with teeth bared.

A refreshing smile like a sunflower blooming on a summer day.

“Of course, don’t use other abilities, if you use that I’ll really die.”

“…I’ll go easy. But you should tell me if it looks like you’re going to get hurt, right?”

“I think you’ll slowly understand what the problem is.”

Pop!

Ichika, who had been muttering, disappeared from sight the moment she closed and opened her eyes.

‘Where?’

My body stiffened in surprise.

And killing intent.

I felt a chilling sensation like an icicle stabbing into the right side of my face and instinctively raised my arm to block.

Thwack!

A heavy fist landed with a sound like hitting a wall.

The power contained in that fist enveloped in green energy was bearable, but I was surprised by the suddenly started fight and used all my nerves to block it.

“Ugh?!”

“Wow, it’s really solid.”

Ichika, having confirmed that my nerves were focused, flexibly twisted her body and did a roundhouse kick.

Whoosh—

A rotation drawing a huge circle with the tip of her foot. The massive force approaching using centrifugal force like a shot put was relatively slow for the power contained.

This time, reacting appropriately, I spread a curtain to block its

approaching path.

Thud!

The roundhouse kick dug in from a blind spot was blocked, but Ichika used the rotational force to twist her body once more and threw a punch in mid-air.

Whoosh

Thud!

Endless rotation and strikes accompanied by the sound of wind.

Her movements, alternating kicks and punches with her whole body, were like a single storm. The more I blocked the attacks that extended with heavy sounds while scattering green energy, the more it felt like entering into the storm.

Whoosh

Thud!

After several exchanges, this time, an attack came into view.

I grasped the path of the extending fist as if in slow motion and pulled my body back to avoid it.

Shik!

A sharp wind sound.

Because I avoided it through evasion rather than defense, Ichika's balance was shaken.

Ichika failed to continue her consecutive attacks for the first time and faltered.

'An opening!'

If I hit there, Ichika would be seriously hurt.

Flinch!

For a moment, I was caught by that thought and couldn't aim for it.

"Heh."

Ichika smiled as if she had expected this.

Her fist wrapped in green energy, which until just now had seemed to have no openings, cut through the wind and grew increasingly fierce.

A barrage like a storm that came again.

For a moment, I was seized by fear of completely losing the initiative in the flow and was busy spreading curtains to defend.

Only defense.

"Opening found!"

Ichika, who had jumped up to 2 meters high by kicking off my curtain that I was using to block in front of me like a Roman soldier, somersaulted in the air and brought her heel down on me.

Rumble!

Along with the sound of thunder, the kick filled with green energy came down like a spear shot with explosive momentum.

Clang!

I barely managed to raise the curtain into the air, but Ichika, who had come down with a leap, dug in low from below and extended her fist.

A fist.

The fist came right up to my eyes.

I prepared while watching the fist slowly approaching my face.

'Too late!'

But the defense that came too late was useless, and I braced for the pain that would follow.

“Up to here… you.”

Ichika spoke quietly while relaxing the strength in her fist.

“You’ve never fought before, right? You don’t want to hurt your opponent but don’t know how hard to hit without hurting them. I can feel that you don’t know how much you can take without getting hurt yourself.”

“…”

It was spot on.

Ichika continued speaking with a ‘heh’ laugh.

“There’s something I can see since I bloomed; I can roughly feel how strong someone is and how to fight them?”

“I see.”

“From what I can see, you’re like a tiger fighting ants with just its tail, keeping its claws retracted for fear of hurting them.”

That was exactly right.

If it was a case of using only large-scale illusion magic, I had confidence thanks to two years of practice, but I had no opportunity to train for minor skirmishes suitable for the recent escape.

‘I don’t want to hurt anyone.’

This mindset became a brake, preventing me from fully utilizing my specs.

At the same time, I had the reassurance that I was a 3-star magical girl who wouldn’t get hurt easily under normal circumstances.

These created large shackles in a corner of my mind, blocking the direction to actively extend offensives while only taking hits.

‘It’s really contradictory to prepare for an apocalypse of killing and being killed while disliking hurting others.’

Ichika said with a confident smile.

“I’ll teach you. How to hit without hurting and how to get hit without pain.”

“…Thank you, Ichika.”

“It’s nothing. It’s natural to do this as a leader.”

“…I’m not the leader.”

Perhaps this weakness of mine, which might have turned into a fatal mistake if left alone, can be seen as fortunate that I was able to complement it by rescuing Ichika.

“Thank you.”

“The debt of gratitude to the leader who saved us can’t be repaid even with this much.”

“I’m telling you, I never said I was the leader.”

We devoted ourselves to training for several hours, exchanging blows without realizing how time passed.

“Ouch!”

Finally tired, Ichika plopped down cross-legged on the floor of the apartment’s empty lot and made a weak sound.

She had spared no advice on techniques while exchanging blows for hours.

“You’re so good after just a little teaching, why were you so timid before?”

“There was no one to tell me where to hit to make someone faint and how to subdue them.”

The area around the empty lot where Ichika and I had been making noise for hours was full of small craters created by attacks that failed in power control or went astray.

The marvelous physical specs of a 3-star magical girl.

Using those, I learned techniques at a rapid pace according to the demonstrations Ichika showed through words and actions, as if using a skill book in a game.

‘How many people’s heads would have burst if this had been real combat.’

Nevertheless, unable to control the power bursting from these formidable physical abilities, they created craters with sounds like balloons popping, like bullets that failed in zeroing.

Fortunately, because Ichika is the toughest fighting type among the born 2-star magical girls mentioned in the original work, she was able to receive such attacks with ease and engage in training.

‘It’s fortunate I didn’t let any stray onto the walls or apartment.’

A paper wolf handed Ichika a cup of instant noodles with the sunset at its back.

“Oh, thank you.”

“It’s already dinner time, huh.”

By the time Ichika and I had fought for a long while, the sun was about to set.

For the 11 girls excluding me and Ichika, it was difficult to eat in the cramped room, so they were sitting in a circle in the corner of the apartment’s empty lot, having their meal.

The wolf, which had somehow brought hot water, handed me a cup of instant noodles too.

“Thank you.”

I accepted the cup noodles and glanced at Haruko.

Haruko was in the middle of a long conversation with someone who liked manga among the magical girls.

While talking, she was writing with a feather pen in her right hand, giving small errands to the paper wolf and having the paper sheep and pig patrol the surroundings.

Thanks to such distributed actions, Ichika and I were able to fight without worrying about sound leaking outside the illusion curtain surrounding the apartment.

"…"

I had lived thinking that I could survive the apocalypse sufficiently on my own.

But when I actually thought about it, it seemed like I had always been living relying on and receiving help from someone since two years ago until now.

"Munch munch, but Shirogane."

"Don't talk while eating, Ichika."

"Munch munch, when are we going to do that Odaiba broadcasting station thing?"

"Hmm, I think it would be good to aim for a live broadcast with as much attention as possible."

"I-I heard that th-they're going to gather magical girls for a t-talk show soon!"

I looked at Haruko in surprise at that sudden remark.

"A talk show?"

"Yes… a f-famous idol planning company s-specially formed a magical girl group, they say."

"…"

Well, a magical girl without blooming is just an ordinary person who can use strange abilities.

It's understandable to treat them as just somewhat unusual girls.

But every time I saw such modest treatment of magical girls in a world from a work where magical girls act as a huge force moving a perishing society, I couldn't get used to it.

'This too is probably happening because they don't know what the power of magical girls means.'

Therefore, to change the perception of this world heading towards the apocalypse due to ignorance, the only way is to forcibly make magical girls bloom by connecting the fates of the stars and show them.

Gravity of fate.

If one were to point out the difference between born 1-star and 2-star, it would be the presence or absence of the gravity of fate.

If girls themselves are already aware of dreams close to fate, they have the qualities of a 2-star magical girl.

Even born 1-star girls can gain great power if they bloom after effort, but it's incomparable to the big star of fate that born 2-star girls possess.

Fate.

Dreams that walk together with some concept connected to the world exert a strong force that attracts each other, changes, and evolves.

'The power given to 100 girls who live as if embodying their own epithets.'

Thanks to the blooming of the born 2-star [Protection] and the full-scale participation of 2-star magical girls in the war, the direction of fate moved towards the apocalypse.

If we use the power of 3-star, which is said to contain the power to move the world, to apply a different direction of gravity to 2-star girls.

If we see the appearance of girls' blooming born before the war, even ordinary people's perceptions will change.

We need to give clues to awaken dreams to as many 2-star girls as possible, attracting their attention.

And the name of this operation is.

"We're going to execute Operation Odaiba Magic Show."

"…"

"…"

"…"

Everyone who had been continuing their harmonious meal while I was thinking fell silent.

"Wow, that's lame."

Chapter 14 : "Grandmother is Still Alive"

Yamashita, the young elite police officer of the Metropolitan Police Department.

He was standing in the bathroom of the broadcasting station lobby, looking at the sink.

Swoosh

Water was flowing, being sucked into a dark hole.

Just like his pathetic self.

He had failed in the operation to arrest Busujima Haruko, which he had forcefully carried out through connections he had mobilized, even ignoring conventions, in order to impress the Superintendent General despite his young age.

“…”

The risk that inevitably follows an unreasonable move.

The responsibility for failure.

All the connections he had mobilized for the operation turned their backs on him.

Yamashita, who had received an angry shout from Director Mori for the first time, was transferred from his original Criminal Investigation Division 1 to be the temporary captain of the Metropolitan Police Department’s riot police.

Nominally, he was the substitute for the former riot police captain who had been caught by a reporter showing disgraceful behavior at

an illegal entertainment establishment.

The riot police captain had resigned, ‘feeling deeply responsible for not stopping his superiors,’ on behalf of the director-level personnel from the Metropolitan Police Department who were at the same place. Yamashita had been put in that vacant position, and he was said to be the temporary captain until the next riot police captain was appointed, but.

‘It’s over.’

Yamashita was not unaware that he was essentially a figurehead.

As soon as he was appointed, he was rushed to the Odaiba site to command security operations without even time for self-introduction.

“…”

Even if he’s just a figurehead warming the seat, there’s a set reporting system.

The radio given to Yamashita should be noisily ringing with reports from five companies.

But except for the public channel, Yamashita’s direct channel was filled with chilling silence.

‘The company commanders probably know too.’

That he would just warm the seat for a moment and soon be demoted to some small rural police station somewhere.

‘To end up guarding a magical girls’ talk show after being demoted for chasing a magical girl case.’

Yamashita laughed bitterly as he looked in the mirror in the bathroom.

The ordinary person in the mirror was also mocking him.

“Sir, it’s time for us to close, so I’m sorry but…”

“Aw~ I need to look around more, I say!”

“I’m really sorry, but we decided to close early today because of the filming. I apologize.”

“Just a li’l bit more~”

From outside the bathroom, he could hear a girl with a stupid-sounding voice arguing with a staff member.

“Oh, Oh-Ono-san! D-Don’t make trouble!”

“Don’t call me by my surname! I swore from the moment I joined the boss, I say!”

“M-Ma’am, it’s troublesome if you shout here…!”

And the sound of a timid-voiced girl, probably a companion, trying to stop her.

‘This one and that one, they’re all just making a fuss trying to see magical girls.’

It was probably because the debut talk show of the first magical girl idol group was planned to be held today, and they were making a fuss trying to watch it.

Originally, an idol group isn’t something that comes out instantly like retort curry, but is born through years of planning and meetings. However, this group was hastily created to match the unprecedented trend of magical girls that had arisen in just one month.

They must have expected that a magical girl group with all members having idol center-level, no, model-level beauty and using supernatural abilities would be a hit, as they spared no investment.

‘They’re probably planning to kill time on variety TV shows with amateurs who aren’t prepared in dance or singing, then pick only the real gems to debut.’

An obvious and sleazy trick.

Such business strategies of the vulgar capitalist market were as clear as the palm of his hand to Yamashita.

“Busujima, say somethin’ too! We haven’t seen everything yet, have we!”

“E-Even if we go up now, the broadcasting station people will stop us.”

“Are you sayin’ we should just leave like this!”

An unusual but familiar surname.

‘Busujima…?’

As soon as Yamashita heard that surname, he rushed out to the lobby. But the two girls who had been making a fuss were not visible in the lobby.

Even when he hurriedly looked around through the window, he could only see staff members closing the escalator going up to the 5th floor.

Yamashita decided to trust his instinct, which was close to certainty, and turned on his radio.

Something is definitely about to happen.

* * *

While Haruko and Kyoko changed their appearances with illusions and went to check inside the broadcasting station.

Ichika and I were observing the surroundings of the broadcasting station from outside.

“By the way, there are really a lot of people～”

A sea of people.

As it was a place known as a tourist attraction, it was usually crowded with people.

But today was even more crowded because it was a monumental day

when those rumored magical girls were making their group debut on TV.

The main entrance on the first floor was tightly closed, and people who looked like police and internal security guards of the broadcasting station were standing guard like an iron wall.

“They’ve already gone in to prepare long ago; what are they coming out to see?”

“They probably want to see them leaving, at least.”

“Does money or food come out when you see their faces?”

“Stop grumbling.”

“Yes, yes.”

Ichika tried to maintain a certain dignity in front of the girls who followed her, including Kyoko, but when she was alone with me like this, her speech oddly became lighter and more frequent. As Ichika and I were waiting together like that, Haruko and Kyoko came.

“The first floor’s crawlin’ with cops and guards, and they’ve blocked the elevator too, I say.”

“Th-They’ve blocked the escalator too.”

“What should we do, Shirogane?”

“Hmm.”

I looked up at the peculiar building that looked like a ball placed on top of jungle gyms.

The broadcasting station’s observation deck.

I heard that today’s filming would take place in the large ball-shaped observation deck at the very top.

“Ah! A-And there was a big staircase that could go straight up to the 7th floor.”

“That place is full of cops too, I say!”

Anyway, to get to the observation deck, we had to take the elevator on the 7th floor.

There was also a method of climbing up from the outside and infiltrating into the building, but if we broke the glass and set off an alarm, it would be all over.

“Let’s cover ourselves with illusion magic and go up the stairs to the 7th floor, then straight up to the observation deck.”

“Okay.”

“Understood, I say!”

“Yes.”

“I think I and Busujima-san need to wear masks, do Ichika and Kyoko want to wear them too?”

Ichika shook her head at those words.

“I’ve already shown my face to Fujimoto anyway, and they might have noticed that I’m with you too.”

“Same for me, I say!”

Haruko, who hadn’t had any dealings with Fujimoto yet, carefully put on a mask as if she felt conscious.

“Then let’s go!”

* * *

The temporary studio set up inside the observation deck was as noisy as the crowded outside due to the filming.

Because a large project involving the debut of a magical girl group on a famous live talk show responsible for weekend evenings was involved, more staff than usual were busily coming and going to conduct the broadcast.

Today's guests, the magical girls, were amateurs who were embarrassing to even call broadcasters.

Therefore, the broadcast was made up of thorough rehearsals and script memorization. And a skilled entertainment MC was leading and carrying the program.

"Haha, so Shizuku-san's hobby is reading while listening to classical music?"

"Y-Yes! Awuu…"

It's a lie.

Shizuku's hobby was watching late-night anime while eating snacks her mama made for her in her room.

'How did it come to this.'

A month ago, Shizuku had gone to Shibuya with her friends, saw the red broadcast, and became a magical girl.

-Eeh?! When did this get in?

-Wow, I don't know what it is, but it's pretty.

-What is this used for?

A special glass star, though she didn't know what it was.

After that, Shizuku went around showing off her glass star to people around her.

But when she came to her senses, she found herself as a regular guest on the radio, telling the morning traffic situation.

'Mama, I'm scared.'

Shizuku, who was just an ordinary baker's daughter.

All these changes were just unfamiliar to her.

'You'll earn a lot of money', 'You can appear on TV too', 'You'll

become famous', she was enticed by the pressuring words of the agency president, and before she knew it, she had come this far.

[Awuu forbidden!]

Because it was a live broadcast, her assigned manager was giving instructions by writing on a large sketchbook from a side not caught on camera.

Mainly when she didn't act according to the script or deviated from the concept, the assigned manager would instruct with a scary expression.

He was a person who was determined to correct her for making stupid sounds, as she was in charge of the group's pure and pitiful literary girl character.

'Haah, how on earth did it come to this.'

Honestly, Shizuku wanted to quit being a broadcaster, which didn't suit her shy nature and didn't even let her eat snacks under the guise of dieting. But pressed by her parents' expectant gazes and her manager's sharp sarcasm, she had been doing clumsy clown acts for a month.

"Yes, that means…"

Silence.

"Huh?"

"…"

"…"

Suddenly, everyone fell silent.

'Wh-What?'

Shizuku was startled by the sudden silence in the studio and tried to figure out if she had made some mistake.

To begin with, even the magical girls from the same group next to her were looking around in confusion.

The scene was as if time had stopped, with all staff members frozen in place.

Only the girls were flustered in that situation.

“Hello, magical girls.”

“Eek?!”

“Kyaa?!”

Behind the guest seats where the five magical girls were sitting, another girl was suddenly sitting and smiling.

She was wearing a dazzlingly white blouse over black suit pants.

She was a mysterious masked girl with a cape covering her shoulders.

‘A-A magician…?’

The girls were frozen, overwhelmed by the unknown spirit emanating from the masked girl.

Click click

The masked girl walked out and stopped in the middle of the studio where everything was frozen. Then, with one hand lightly placed on her chest and the other hand raised high, she made an elegant bow by bending her waist.

“Hello, everyone in the nation.”

“It’s nice to meet you.”

“I am the one hosting the girls’ débutante today.”

“A nameless magical girl.”

Chapter 15 : The Girls' Debutante

[I am a nameless magical girl.]

A corridor where smartphone sounds reverberate.

There was a petite girl there.

Sharp eyes.

She was walking towards the studio, the broadcasting station's observation deck where filming was taking place, wearing a form-fitting men's suit.

"…"

One of the two swords owned by the Fujimoto family.

A rank Ding kunoichi from the Mumei, who eliminates internal traitors or sworn enemies of the Fujimoto family.

Kaede was chasing the magical girl in the photo according to Elder Fujimoto's first order.

For some reason, the face in the captured photo was blurred, so she couldn't track by appearance. But she could guess where she would appear next based on her actions.

'Instead of invading Fujimoto's territory with her power, she only acted to rescue the test subjects and disappeared,'

A person immersed in humanitarian ideology.

A person with a sense of solidarity towards magical girls.

If she has such thoughts, she would appear where magical girls gather.

And she actually appeared.

“Hey, you shouldn’t look at your phone while walking.”

Stop

In front of Kaede’s eyes, she turned her gaze from her smartphone.

A girl in a sailor uniform with an impressive green ribbon was blocking the corridor.

That girl said with a confident smile.

“Are you from Fujimoto? You don’t smell of blood, so you must be a rookie.”

“…”

Kaede knew her face.

Yamanaka Ichika.

A girl who was in the Fujimoto research facility.

“I thought Fujimoto’s lackey might come towards the leader, so I switched with the broadcasting room… I guess I was right?”

“…”

Rattle

In Kaede’s hand was a chain sickle that had been hidden behind her back.

The moonlight reflected on the sharp blade had a chilling color.

Killing intent.

But Ichika’s smile reflected on the polished blade was unwavering.

Ichika extended her right fist towards Kaede.

She firmly planted her two legs on the ground and lowered her body until her thighs were taut.

The stability of a mountain standing against sharp winds.

Now, if she raises her left fist and fixes it in front of her chest, her posture will be complete to respond to attacks from all directions.

Kisuishiki Rikugouken (Six Harmonies Fist)

“I absolutely won’t let you pass here. Fujimoto’s hunting dog.”

“…”

Rattle!

The fight began with the chain sickle flying towards her.

Bloomed born 2-star [Freedom] magical girl Ichika

Unbloomed born 2-star magical girl Kaede.

Battle begins!

* * *

The staff members who suddenly all stopped moving at once.

The inside of the studio was eerily quiet.

“Ma-Magical girl?”

“Yes, I too am a magical girl.”

I gestured elegantly towards the camera and said.

“I have something I’d like to tell the people of this nation, taking this opportunity today.”

Flutter-

I took out the documents I had retrieved from the Fujimoto research facility from my chest.

Content showing the intention to ruthlessly squeeze out the test subject magical girls.

I took them out and levitated them with psychic power.

The documents passed through the prism curtain and expanded to cover the entire wall behind the studio.

“Supernatural ability… weaponization… plan…?”

“We-Weapons?! Soldiers?!”

“Is this real…?”

The voices of the magical girls who had come out as today’s guests could be heard exclaiming as they read the pages.

And I responded accordingly.

“That’s exactly right.”

Click

“Mr. Fujimoto, who acts like the owner of this country, has a plan to kidnap magical girls without guardians and seize the power of magical girls through harsh training and experiments.”

“Fu… Fuji…?!”

“Shh!!”

“You shouldn’t say that name carelessly in front of others! It’ll be a big deal…!”

The illusion curtain spread out behind the studio next.

There, scenes of the quarters where Ichika’s group had been confined, the merciless training process, and armed guards chasing them fiercely with guns were played in succession.

The faces of the girls in the illusion were obscured by noise so their expressions couldn't be seen, but the pain they had experienced could be felt even outside the screen.

"Is this."

"Are all these things."

"Really what should have been done to girls who were living ordinary lives until just recently?"

The girls were silent.

Thud!

I struck down my staff and removed the illusion from behind the studio.

"To those who are seriously mistaken about something, I'd like to inform you that magical girls are not beings to be used by someone or used as tools… that they too are just ordinary girls and beings who can shine on their own."

"And I."

"Have come out today to prove that."

Snap!

With a cheerful finger snap, the appearance of the studio set up inside the spherical observation deck began to change.

[Deception] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Dream World

Sunlight.

Warm sunlight.

Clear skies stretching far away and rose gardens.

Thousands, tens of thousands of roses blooming on fresh green

branches were embracing the girls.

A huge rose garden.

“On a joyous day like today, beautiful roses would be more fitting than documents filled with adults’ unpleasant greed, wouldn’t they?”

I plucked a rose and handed it to a girl who was looking around with an enraptured expression.

“Shizuku-san.”

“Y-Yes?!”

The girl’s face turned as red as the rose, seemingly flustered.

“Your dream… what is true happiness to you?”

“Dream… my dream?”

The girl who had stopped without accepting the rose hesitated for a moment.

“Um… co-coming on broadcasts… becoming famous… um…”

“Not those things decided by adults.”

I encouraged her in a gentle voice.

“That ‘dream’ that you truly want, from the depths of your heart…”

“Dream…”

Shizuku, who had been muttering for a moment, gave an answer mixed with a choking sound.

The bursting truth.

“I-I want to be a baker who makes others happy like Mama…!”

Such a beautiful and precious dream.

Like a rose that hurts when touched, Shizuku’s dream, spoken aloud,

was painful and lovely.

“Not an entertainer…! I-I want to become… a baker! Sob…”

I gave the rose to Shizuku.

When Shizuku accepted the rose with her tear-stained face.

The rose changed into something with a warm light.

A croissant.

A savory smell.

Mother’s memory.

Daily life.

The girl who revealed her true feelings with sincere tears bloomed like a blossoming rose.

A true magical girl.

Blooming.

“Eh?! Th-This is?!”

I turned my gaze from Shizuku, who was surprised by her changed outfit, and asked the girls behind her as well.

“Everyone, join in too! What are your dreams?”

“Eh?! I want a restaurant…!”

“I want Grandpa’s used bookstore…!”

“I want to be a newspaper reporter like Dad…!”

“I want a bicycle shop…!”

Perhaps enchanted by the magical scenery.

The girls revealed their ‘dreams’ one after another, as if they had

been frustrated with the events of the past month.

Their stiff expressions loosened, and before they knew it, even their cheeks were tinged like roses with excitement.

The sight of the girls chattering about their dreams was more beautiful than thousands, tens of thousands of roses.

[Baking] Magical Girl.

[Gourmet] Magical Girl.

[Booklover] Magical Girl.

[Reporting] Magical Girl.

[Silver Wheel] Magical Girl.

The blooming of born 1-star magical girls.

It was a concrete manifestation of the metaphysical concept called ‘dreams’, and a resonance of the brilliant lights in everyone’s hearts that had been forgotten.

Dream.

Through the appearance of dreams, the admiration and interest of girls who might be somewhere beyond the camera.

I could feel the powerful gravitational pull of fate possessed by 2-star magical girls concentrating on me.

‘Not all, but a considerable number. Now it’s time to move on to the final stage.’

I signaled to Haruko, who had been helping by turning the camera this way and that with the paper sheep and pig, and Haruko fixed the camera, hugged the paper sheep, and disappeared somewhere.

“On a beautiful débutante of girls like today, a fitting grand finale would be needed, wouldn’t it?”

Snap!

Rose petals from the rose fields filling the surroundings all took flight at once.

A rain of rose scent and petals embroidered over the blue sky.

They were fireworks celebrating the second birth of magical girls, and a ballroom for girls who had changed from outfits engraved with adults' desires into magical girl dresses embodying their own dreams.

"Wow…"

"So pretty…"

"…Like a dream."

With the girls gazing at the endlessly falling rose petals behind me.

I walked towards the back of the observation deck.

Thump thump thump thump

On the opposite side of the studio.

There was a presence urgently approaching from beyond the door far away.

Slam!

"Don't move! This is Yamashita from the Metropolitan Police Department!!"

Dozens of armed police officers.

I smiled as I looked at the police officers rushing in.

'I hope Kyoko and Ichika who were blocking the door escaped safely?'

The police officers approaching me with guns pointed seemed bewildered by the surrounding scenery.

"Wh-What is this?!"

“Why is there a flower garden here?!”

“Well then, since the uninvited guests have arrived, let’s bring down the curtain on today’s stage.”

I spoke while looking at the camera.

Towards Fujimoto who would be watching me through the camera.

“If you’re going to sacrifice girls out of greed.”

“I’ll awaken the stars hidden in darkness with dreams.”

“The power of dreams held by the stars is something you cannot possess…”

I said while looking at today’s stage.

“Timid Mr. Fujimoto, please don’t take out your anger on the staff for today’s events!”

“To all magical girls, your second birth today… your debut as magical girls!”

“I, the magical girl of [Beginning], bless you!”

It’s a lie.

My epithet is the magical girl of [Deception].

But if I can deceive the fate of this world, I’ll even deceive my own epithet.

I then escaped through the wall of the observation deck using Blink.

The police officers remained stuck to the window wall, watching dumbfounded as I slowly fell.

“Leader!!”

“Shirogane-san!!”

“Uwaaah?!”

“I’m back.”

I safely landed on Haruko’s paper sheep, which was flying while greatly inflated.

Ichika, Haruko, and Kyoko were safely aboard the paper sheep.

“Heheh, Fujimoto’s lackey came and I smashed them!”

“You’re amazing! Boss!!”

“Wh-Where should we go now?!”

Below the Odaiba broadcasting station, numerous spectators could be seen looking up at us curiously.

“We shouldn’t neglect the audience who came to see us, right?”

“What?”

I expanded the dream world of the spherical observation deck so that rose petals would reach the people below. People were smiling as they looked at the petals above their heads in wonder.

“…Let’s cross the bridge and go back like this.”

“Yes!”

Girls riding a giant paper sheep crossing over the bridge.

Girls who bloomed in a rain of roses, not war.

Now the original work has been twisted.

What’s left for me is…

“Leader.”

“Hm?”

“That was fun.”

Ichika said with a grin.

“I’m counting on you from now on too.”

“That’s right, I say!”

“H-Heheh…”

“Hehee… hehehe…!”

“Pffft…”

“Ahahahaha!!”

What are these kids laughing about?

And why am I laughing too?

I don’t know why, but…

Now I don’t feel scared anymore.

Chapter 16 : Change #1

“I!! I will continue to pursue them!!”

“Yamashita, you’re crossing the line.”

“I’ve let them slip through my fingers twice! Please give me a chance to make up for it!”

“Yamashita.”

Rather calmed by the repeated insistence, Director Mori let out a deep sigh.

Although he was a bit of an unpleasant youngster, he had always been mentioned as the top candidate for future high-ranking positions within the Metropolitan Police Department. Seeing him now throwing tantrums like a child, abandoning his dignity as a man, it even made Mori feel somewhat pitiful.

“The last plan never happened, forget it all. It was something we didn’t know about.”

“Ugh…”

“It’s always been like this, hasn’t it? We live like flowing water, according to public opinion and circumstances.”

“Please… I beg you…!”

Yamashita bowed his body completely, lowering his head so deeply that his crown couldn’t be seen.

“The Superintendent General told us to keep our mouths shut tight. Forget about magical girls and the Busujima case.”

“…”

“Even Congressman Fujimoto himself, who’s involved, wants to let it pass quietly, what on earth are you chasing?”

Yamashita, who until recently had been favored by the Superintendent General and acted as a messenger.

But at some point, no information came down to him anymore.

An abandoned horse.

Tap

Director Mori, rather than reprimanding Yamashita who had acted more rudely than ever before, extended a hand of sympathy.

“Take a few days off and come back.”

“…”

Director Mori just passed by, and only Yamashita remained with his head lowered in front of the Criminal Investigation Division 1 corridor.

And in the corner of the corridor, a multi-colored afterimage faintly sparkled.

* * *

July 18th

“If you! Out of greed! Sacrifice! Girls!!!”

“I! Will! Awaken! The stars! Hidden in darkness! With dreams!!!”

“Then… hug… hic… ju…!!”

I don’t know how many times these guys have been mocking me for overreacting when I got emotional.

Two weeks have passed since the ‘Girls’ Debutante’.

The early summer with cool breezes blowing occasionally has stepped into full-fledged summer with tremendous heat that arrived

with cicada sounds as a signal.

The series of events that started with Sato Hana's walk.

They rolled and rolled, evolving into the structure of [Fujimoto VS Me].

Society was changing due to my resolution.

The future I knew from the original work seemed to be gradually disappearing.

At the same time, I felt relieved.

While preparing for a world that would become an apocalypse, I couldn't shake off connections like the Sato family and the Master.

Despite having an overwhelming advantage as a born 3-star magical girl.

I wanted to save someone rather than harm them in my heart.

Contradiction.

Irrationality.

Fear.

My life for the past 2 years was a deception and torment I gave to myself.

The bloomed magical girls who should have appeared only in December this year were now being spotted all over society in mid-July. And the leader of FLAG, who should have been covered in blood all over her body crying for revenge, was peacefully joking around even at my workplace.

"Heh! Fujimoto, you're a greedy-guts!"

"Don't give blessings to magical girls, I say!"

"…"

It was a level of joking that might seem a bit dangerous if others heard it.

Fortunately, the Master had gone out to buy new coffee beans, so he was absent. So the only ones in the cafe were these two beggars who had been loitering for 2 hours after ordering just one espresso (200 yen).

'It's quiet now that the group of 13 has reduced to 3.'

After hearing the name of the police chief who had barged in right before the last escape, I had secretly infiltrated a clone into the Metropolitan Police Department to grasp the situation.

Fujimoto, who I thought would be raging after the incident, was quiet.

Rather, he expressed his intention to gloss over the supernatural ability weaponization plan.

-Is the Fujimoto Group acknowledging the facts?

-No, we are not.

-What do you think about the recent broadcast?

-It's groundless.

After that, the spokesperson for the Fujimoto Group did not answer any of the questions from reporters who were pouring out more agitated questions than before.

-Th-Thank you! I think I need to go home now.

-Are you sure you'll be okay without my help?

-My, my parents will be very worried. And, and I think I need to face trial now.

A moment's mistake.

And the numerous responsibilities that follow.

Nevertheless, Haruko smiled brightly and tried to bear them all.

-I want to try on my own as Shirogane-san said.

Just before returning home, she thanked me one last time. And so, Haruko returned to where she originally was, 3 weeks after the day she ran away.

-Oh, really? Of course I should help~

Mrs. Sato's original workplace, a local handicraft factory, had no more people to work, so Mrs. Sato, who was trying to quit her job because of Hana, was worried about not being able to hand over her work.

But when four magical girls expressed their willingness to work this time, they were so welcomed that the elderly single lady president told them all to come in as her daughters.

-I'll ask a welfare worker I know.

Although the Master spoke gruffly, he didn't ask where those 3 orphan magical girls came from or why I was concerned about their whereabouts.

The very next day, a bus from a Christian welfare center drove to where the cafe was and took them away.

-Boss! Me and Nene-chan were going to return to our original orphanage.

-I talked to the director, and he said he had been searching a lot.

The 2 who found out that the director of their original orphanage had been so worried that he even issued a nationwide search.

They contacted the orphanage director in Hokkaido, and returned to Hokkaido with the director who flew down that very day.

-Boss. No, Ichika-chan! Sob… Thank you for protecting us all this time. Take care!

-Heh, why are you crying when you're going to a good place.

Everything comes to an end.

Girls who were destined to go from the tragedy of becoming test subjects to war.

They left to find their own lives in a new time.

The day everyone left.

When the three of us, me, Kyoko, and Ichika, lay down to sleep.

The affectionate Ichika seemed to be crying quietly, holding back her sobs.

Of course, Kyoko and I pretended not to notice.

‘Even excluding the mass media being wary of Fujimoto, the public reaction was weaker than expected.’

Perhaps the impact was weak because we rescued them too quickly.

There’s always a brief article in one corner of the news about young people working for black companies choosing to end their lives because they couldn’t withstand office politics or various types of power harassment.

It was a world where young people dying from overwork didn’t even make the news.

It seems the impact wasn’t enough to even be buried under gossip articles about magical exploitation of minors without any victims.

“…”

“Ah～ This is boring. Leader, you’re not reacting at all now that you’re used to it.”

“Boss! There’s something new on Witch Talk, I say!”

“Oh, looks like Shizuku made a new magic bread.”

“Bread that shrinks with psychic power in your stomach so you can eat twice as much?”

“I-Isn’t this cheating?”

The quick retreat of companies that don’t want to clash with Fujimoto.

Because of that, the magical girl group plan was scrapped, but the girls who learned how to awaken their own dreams were active, showing their dreams through magic.

Peace.

With just one stage, the fate of magical girls was taking steps towards peace.

I muttered with a sense of achievement and relief that I had done it.

“Peace is good…”

“Right? Being peaceful is good.”

“That’s right!”

“But why aren’t you two leaving?”

Ichika and Kyoko were flustered and couldn’t answer my question right away.

“What do you mean?”

“Didn’t we become comrades that night in Odaiba?”

“That’s right! You said you were counting on us!!”

“…Is that what that meant?”

* * *

“So?”

“I was overwhelmingly defeated.”

“I see.”

Kaede was prostrating herself while feeling her clavicle, which still hadn't fully healed, rattling.

It took her two weeks to get up after the fight.

The tremendous healing power that comes naturally as a 2-star magical girl.

Even with that tremendous healing power, it took two weeks to get up.

"So there's a big difference between those who have bloomed and those who haven't, even among supernatural ability users."

"…"

"To think an ordinary girl could inflict full-body fractures on a kunoichi from the Mumei unit."

"…Please punish me."

"I'll make the decision, Kaede."

"Yes, Elder."

Fujimoto Eiji was neither angry nor flustered.

He was ignorant about supernatural abilities, and the opponent knew about them.

He was ignorant about the level of the opponent, and the opponent knew about it.

That was all.

What was consumed can be replenished, that's all.

"I thought she was a thief trying to tarnish the Fujimoto name, but she was someone who was astonished at seeing a beggar digging the ground with gold."

"…"

“I almost made the mistake of trying to consume a warrior with the logic of a common soldier.”

“…”

“This is good, I can give Sumire better swords.”

“…”

Fujimoto Eiji said as he left the dark room without any lingering attachment.

He had no interest in a touchstone that had already been used. Because he could get better swords.

“From now on, you will assist Sumire.”

“Yes, Elder.”

As Kaede answered while prostrating, she was bothered by her rattling clavicle.

More precisely, she was bothered by the person who had inflicted this injury.

An orphan like herself.

Yet free.

Under that fist, Kaede had crumbled helplessly.

What she had trained for her entire life gritting her teeth crumbled.

-A hunting dog without its own will should be beaten down!

She envied that free girl.

Crack

“Someday… definitely…”

Before she knew it, one feeling that a ninja should abandon was sprouting in Kaede’s heart.

Chapter 17 : Change #2

A solemn atmosphere flowed through the auditorium.

There, girls wearing white dresses inspired by nurse uniforms, aprons, and armbands embroidered with red crosses were reciting an oath with determined voices.

[…Therefore, I swear on my honor as a magical girl!]

[I swear.]

[I swear.]

[I swear.]

Clap clap clap clap!

A vow to treat people and continue honorable activities as magical girls.

The numerous adults gathered in the auditorium congratulated their noble vows with all their might.

Himari, the only bloomed 2-star magical girl among the magical girls gathered there, followed the guidance of a Red Cross staff member as a representative.

Following the staff member's guidance, she began discussing future schedules with doctors invited as temporary advisors.

[With this, 15 magical girls including Himari-san, the magical girl of [Nursing], have declared that they will become the Magical Girl Relief Corps and continue medical volunteer activities with conscience and dignity.]

[Meanwhile, opinions were also raised that if the medical system

collapses while relying on healing abilities that cannot heal congenital disabilities and amputated bodies, there could be many victims.]

[The Japan Medical Association has refrained from giving an official response, but announced that they are looking for ways to coexist with magical girls' supernatural ability treatments.]

[While some opinions have emerged that humanity has finally completely overcome disease, most say it's still premature…]

* * *

-Thread #27 for talking about your favorite magical girls-

-67 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

Himari-chan is a complete angel… I want to be nursed… Hnnng.

-68 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

So happy that the number of beautiful girls has increased dramatically…

-69 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

(Photo of bread bought from Shizuku's bakery) I waited 7 hours to buy this. Taking questions.

-70 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

Are you a NEET with too much time on your handswwww

-71 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

What are you saying? It's 'common sense' to devote that much time to a beautiful girl baker.

-72 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

Bread with the precious 'that' of magical girls is the best! Your lifespan increases by 7 years!

-73 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

That's magic, isn't itwwwww Don't call it weird thingswwwwww

-74 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

Alright! Himari squad, break one leg each and assemble in front of the relief corps headquarters!!

-75 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

Roger.

-76 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

Roger. And [Booklover]-chan's glasses are invincible too.

-77 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

But is no one fanning over [Beginning]-chan?

-78 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

?????

-79 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

(Ah, another one of these guys. Con)

-80 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

(The leather club is two blocks down, friend. Con)

-81 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

There are plenty of dedicated threads for the Guru, go therewwww

-82 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

Guru???

-83 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

[Beginning]-chan is overwhelming because the magical girl era started thanks to her

-84 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

Silver-haired busty magician… Hnnng… Can handle up to 4 rice balls…

-85 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

Speaks Japanese well but is a different race alone

-86 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

[Live broadcast recording video link] Amen

-87 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

Amen

-88 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

Amen

-89 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

Ah reallywwww When [Beginning]-chan bait comes around, the thread topic gets seriously pollutedwww

-90 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

The Guru hasn't been seen since then, I wonder if she'll come out…

-91 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

There were rumors that the Guru was forming a magical girl group

-92 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

Give me the name of that magical girl group or the Witch Talk link

-93 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

[SNS address link with ‘Salon’ written]

-94 : Anonymous 2011/07/18

Salon?

* * *

The nights in Kabukicho were not dark.

Light bursting from flashy neon signs and signboards.

On this street filled with the smell of alcohol and perfume, entertainment establishments emitted dazzling lights to lure passing people.

Men and women staggering from alcohol.

Sticky gazes.

Blatant desires.

Just as a butterfly’s wing flap is as fleeting and thin as it is gorgeous.

A place where men and women who live for a day, enjoy a night, and give themselves to fleeting pleasures dance and sing.

There, a single motorcycle was rushing through the air.

Vrooom!!

“Kyaa?! What’s that?”

“Th-Th-That crazy girl is at it again!”

“Hey! It’s too noisy!”

A motorcycle rushing over the night streets.

It was like something out of an urban legend, but the eyes of the people watching the motorcycle were filled with exasperation rather than fear or curiosity.

“Hoeh!! Today’s ride feels refreshing too!!”

The girl wearing a fluorescent orange helmet shaped like cat ears twisted the throttle and rushed at full speed.

“If I accelerate a bit more!! I might be able to reach the speed of light!!”

“You crazy girl!! Stop it!!”

“Why do you only go in front of our shop!!”

“Please stop already!!”

The madams and managers of each entertainment establishment came out and protested loudly.

But the girl’s rush showed no signs of stopping.

Because that motorcycle was too fast for those who had given themselves to worldly desires to catch.

Her rush didn’t stop.

Endlessly leaving a fluorescent orange starlight trail like a line.

Endlessly advancing.

Vrooom!!

“Uwaaaaah!! Someone stop that crazy girl!!”

“We’re all going to be ruined at this rate!!”

Vrooom!!

The people’s shouts could no longer be heard, buried under the roar of the motorcycle.

Bloomed born 2-star magical girl of [Rush].

* * *

A phone call reporting a giant strange life form roaming around the square next to the Kabukicho movie theater.

At first, they thought it was a prank call, but after repeated reports, the middle-aged police officer who finally went out was dumbfounded.

Kuung!

Kuung!

Pshhhhh—

Whirr—Click!

A robot.

An ivory-colored pointed rectangular body.

The joint parts connecting the robot's arms and legs revealed various pipes and wires glimpsed, and its hands were equipped with huge futuristic-design rifles that could appear in sci-fi movies.

On its back, a cannon reminiscent of a huge self-propelled gun.

It rose up like a chimney and swayed threateningly in sync with the robot's movements. Every time it moved its reverse-jointed legs, huge vibrations echoed.

Thud—

Thud—

Pshhh—

Spewing out hot engine heat, the giant armor was taking majestic steps in the square next to the movie theater.

A huge size similar to a 3-story building next to the movie theater.

Due to its overwhelming size, sidewalk blocks and streetlights were being smashed every time it took a step.

The path the armor had passed through felt like looking around a place where an earthquake had occurred.

The police officer who had been watching blankly for a moment hurriedly picked up a megaphone.

“St-Stop!! This is the police!! Robot!! Anyway, come out right now!!”

Whirr-

A red flash blinked from the head part of the armor.

“Hah?!”

The moment the armor’s red mono-eye looked at the police officer.

Surprised by the overwhelming pressure, the police officer dropped the megaphone.

[Nyufufufu, do you think I’ll hand over my super cool Armor No. 1?]

A delicate girl’s voice spread through the microphone built into the armor.

[Nyuhihihi, with the power bestowed by our true leader…]

The armor raised the rifles in both hands to show its intimidating presence.

A posture like a roaring warrior.

Whirr—

[I’ve gained the freedom to show off my super cool Armor No. 1!]

Even though everyone was trembling in fear, the girl was nonchalant as if playing a game.

Bloomed born 2-star magical girl of [Armor]

* * *

On the rooftop of a department store in Kabukicho.

A curly-haired girl wearing a khaki air force jacket, who had been watching this whole situation, laughed heartily.

She laughed with all her might as if shaking off the frustration that had plagued her for years.

“Hahahahaha!! This is it!! This is freedom!!!”

“Thank you!!! Leader!!!”

“Please accept our humble fireworks from our ‘Salon’ dedicated to you!!”

Ratatatatat

Following her instructions, who could summon machine guns at will, a tremendous amount of blank ammunition was fired, making a thunderous noise.

Two huge machine guns floating behind the girl.

She began to play a hymn of fireworks dedicated to the magical girl of [Beginning] who had given them the power to overcome this stifling reality.

A hymn sent to the noblest girl.

A poem of respect sent towards her.

A song of joy from girls who have gained freedom.

The girl enjoyed the moment, feeling the gratitude towards that noble magical girl of [Beginning] bursting out.

Ratatatatat

Fear blooms in the hateful streets to the sound of blank ammunition fired by machine guns.

This world can no longer treat them as non-existent.

The moment they transform from invisible people to humans appearing in this world.

The girl who summoned the machine guns spread both hands high towards the sky.

Ratatatatat

“Machine guns… are love!!!”

Bloomed born 2-star magical girl of [Machine Gun]

* * *

“Salon?”

“Oh, isn’t that what the leader made?”

On the phone screen Ichika showed, Kabukicho in a state of complete chaos could be seen.

Why on earth is there a motorcycle flying through the air rushing down the street?

A 10-meter-sized robot walking around smashing the streets?

A shower of bullets being fired with a thunderous roar flowing?

…And the kids doing this are claiming to be members of a group ‘I’ made?

When I heard this news, I felt my mind going blank.

“Me?”

“Yeah.”

“When?”

Chapter 18 : Kabukicho Battle

July 18th

“Hikari-chan! I became a magical girl!”

“Hmm… Hana-chan, you were already a magical girl.”

“Eep! That’s not it!”

Hana, who had come running excitedly to show off, seemed disappointed that it wasn’t acknowledged. She stamped her tiny feet, gesturing to hurry and notice.

‘I can’t really tell even with that gesture.’

Only the sound of Hana’s stomping feet could be heard for a while in the quiet cafe.

Ichika and Kyoko, who had been hanging around for a while, had been teasing me but seemed to have gotten bored and were now blankly watching TV turned on in a corner of the cafe where I work.

In the midst of this, Hana, who lives near the cafe, suddenly came running to show me something to brag about.

Magical girl.

Something to brag about.

After the debutante.

“Oh… could it be?”

“Mm-hmm!”

Snap!

As Hana cutely raised one hand, her side tail that her mother had tied swayed like a puppy's tail.

"Transform!"

Hana took out a yellow glass star with an excited, loud voice. There, starlight that had appeared due to blooming was shining dazzlingly.

The twinkling of starlight.

A yellow flash.

Yellow starlight that burst out from the glass star completely enveloped Hana's body, changing her outfit.

Bloomed born 1-star magical girl of [Swiftness]

Sato Hana's blooming.

A yellow fluorescent jacket.

A white shirt faintly glowing with starlight.

Black shorts with yellow stardust visible.

Running shoes sparkling with yellow star stickers looked as if they wanted to run off somewhere far away right now.

A girl imbued with starlight.

A yellow meteor.

'Oh… her hair color?'

Yellow.

Surprisingly, after transforming, Hana's hair had changed to the same yellow color as her glass star.

"Oh…? Do kids these days change hair color when they transform?"

"No, you're a kid these days too."

“Leader, don’t mind such things. You sound like an old man.”

“…”

Ichika seemed to have turned her attention to the commotion here, scratching her bottom as she slowly joined our table. Kyoko also followed Ichika, subtly scratching her back as she joined.

‘These kids act so rough, they’re like younger cousins.’

Although both Ichika and Kyoko had cute appearances in their own way, it wasn’t very noticeable due to their rough attitude both inside and outside. Kyoko at least tried to be mindful in front of others, but Ichika was just wild through and through.

“Wow~ Even such a little one blooms, but I’m still far from it…”

“Were you worried about that?”

“I’m a magical girl too, you know.”

As she said, Kyoko still hadn’t bloomed her own star, so her orange glass star remained in an unbloomed state.

She seemed to have been subtly concerned, comparing herself to Ichika who bloomed in an instant and me whom she met already in a bloomed form from the start.

“Hehehehe!”

Pleased that those around her were admiring her appearance, Hana hopped up and down, her yellow-changed side tail swaying up and down.

“Look at this!”

“Ooh.”

Hana started taking all sorts of poses to express her good mood.

A cute pose with one foot raised.

“Yap!”

“Ooh.”

“So cute!”

A pose like doing figure skating with one leg raised high.

“Yop!”

“Ooh, you’re flexible? Want to learn some martial arts?”

A pose imitating martial arts with small fists extended.

“Hah!”

“Cool!”

As if not knowing what to do with her joy, Hana took all sorts of poses and enjoyed the reactions, and Ichika and Kyoko, noticing this, continued to praise her in succession.

‘Hana-chan isn’t usually this open with others… Is it because she’s seen Ichika and Kyoko often at the cafe and doesn’t feel uncomfortable?’

An endless shower of praise.

The joy of successful blooming.

Sato Hana’s happiness level had exceeded the critical point and she couldn’t contain her joy.

“Calm down, Hana-chan.”

“Hehehe! Thank you, Hikari-chan.”

I grabbed Hana’s shoulders and massaged them to calm her down.

She was already excited to the point where her heartbeat could be felt, with her naturally high body temperature.

Ichika and Kyoko patted Hana’s head, saying how cute her innocent appearance was.

“Heheh, really a cute little one.”

“Uiii! Don’t treat me like a kid!”

“Aww, so cute.”

Ichika put her hands under Hana’s armpits and lifted her up like an airplane, making buzzing sounds.

At first surprised, Hana soon giggled and enjoyed the play.

“Haah…”

“What’s wrong, Kyoko?”

Kyoko hesitated and then spoke.

“I didn’t do anything last time in Odaiba either.”

“Ah… So what? As long as we all got out safely, it’s fine.”

“If only I had bloomed well… Maybe I should have just stayed home…”

It was refreshing to see Kyoko, who always spoke energetically with her ‘I say’ endings, being anxious for the first time.

The blooming of stars depends on how well one knows their own dream.

It varies greatly depending on how close that dream is to fate.

After the first blooming that appeared around December 2011 in the original work, some people bloomed right after Fujimoto Sumire, like Ichika who was the leader of FLAG.

‘Ichika just showed an exceptionally strong reaction to fate…’

The majority of born 1-star girls disappeared without ever showing a bloomed form.

Above all, the original work only featured veterans who survived the war and alliance among the 2-star girls.

‘They all tasted blood and went crazy.’

Most 1-star magical girls were blocked from blooming on their own due to the curse of struggle, so they fought each other to accumulate power.

The protagonist Shikishima Yuki was a miraculous case who increased her own number of stars in the midst of fighting against demons, so there weren’t many types of bloomed magical girls that actually appeared.

‘Even in volume 1, half of it was about getting food.’

Although a shop window that could obtain items using starlight appeared in the realm of born 3-star magical girls. Since it was originally a story about escaping from the realm of the magical girl of [War], the protagonist didn’t use it much.

“Ah, come to think of it, leader.”

“Hm? Wait, but Ichika calls me boss and you call me leader?”

“What does it matter? More importantly, what about the leader’s glass star?”

“Ah.”

Except for Haruko, no one has seen it properly.

I took out the colorless glass star from my chest and showed it to Kyoko.

A huge starlight shining in various colors formed a triangle, emitting endless energy.

The power of a huge world that no one else could show until next year.

“Hmm.”

“There are three.”

“Wow～”

As expected, the reactions of the group who saw the power of the huge world were bland.

It’s only been a short while since blooming was discovered in the first place.

No one even felt the difference between born 1-star and 2-star.

‘Since the Fujimoto Disturbance probably won’t happen either…’

It would be difficult for them to grasp the meaning of the difference in the number of stars, as I had never shown a display of overwhelming power against magical girls like Fujimoto Sumire had shown on the battlefield.

‘…Still, couldn’t they show a bit more admiration for the magic class I’m showing?’

I felt somewhat disappointed, like an uncle who witnessed his nephews and nieces leaving most of the delicious food he bought them, saying they were full.

So I stuffed the colorless glass star back into my pocket.

“By the way, where does Sato live?”

“Around here!”

“Ooh, so you live in Yokohama.”

“Yes! I live in that white house over there!”

“When I did loading and unloading part-time work last time, I felt this was really a neighborhood with nice weather.”

The cafe returned to a peaceful atmosphere.

Ichika went back to the corner seat and took out her smartphone to watch the news.

I returned to the counter and pretended to organize things while

turning the espresso machine.

If we fool around too much, the neighborhood people passing by might see and tattle to the Master in this close-knit neighborhood.

Just as it seemed a quiet time had arrived, Ichika suddenly called me.

“Leader!”

“Yes?”

“Do we have any other comrades besides us?”

“No? What are you talking about?”

I was surprised by the sudden out-of-nowhere remark and stared quietly at Ichika.

“Then what’s Salon?”

“Salon?”

“Oh, didn’t you make it?”

“Come here and take a look.”

I put down the cloth I was using to wipe the espresso machine and looked closely at the smartphone screen Ichika was showing.

[A group of magical girls claiming to be ‘Salon’ is causing a disturbance in Kabukicho!]

[While claiming their leader is the magical girl of <Beginning>…]

[Is this a terrorist act by magical girls under someone’s orders?]

[Meanwhile, what’s being fired from the machine gun on the department store rooftop…]

I suddenly felt uneasy due to information about a familiar figure.

‘Why is the magical girl of [Machine Gun] here?’

She was a character that appeared in the original work.

But the other two were figures I had never seen before.

A motorcycle flying over the streets.

An armored robot marching through the streets.

A machine gun firing towards the sky.

All of these were running rampant around Kabukicho, creating a chaotic situation. And I saw a news caption saying that the magical girls carrying this out were claiming to be members of a group I created.

“Me?”

“Yeah.”

“When?”

“I don’t know that either.”

Ichika shrugged as she answered.

“But should we just leave this alone?”

“…”

Even the current situation is a peace created through a method close to a surprise attack.

The perception of magical girls that barely changed after seeing the performance and miracle of the magical girl of [Beginning].

If that changes savagely like in the original work, and a situation full of sharp confrontations returns.

It might become the spark that returns to the tragedy of ＜Magical Girl HAZARD＞ that started with the domain declaration of the magical girl of [War].

I don’t care about the epithet of the magical girl of [Beginning] being

tarnished.

But now that ordinary magical girls' dreams are barely blooming. I had to stop the riot of magical girls from happening.

"Kyoko."

"Yes?"

"Sorry, but can you watch the shop for me?"

"Eeh?!"

Kyoko looked surprised, as if she hadn't expected her earlier words to come back and become reality.

But I didn't mind that and handed the apron to Kyoko as if throwing it. Then I called Ichika, who seemed to have already finished preparations.

"Ichika! Let's go!"

"Oh. I was just itching for some action!"

"Wait!"

Hana raised her hand and shouted.

"I want to go too!"

"What?"

"I'm a magical girl now too, so I want to do good deeds!"

"…"

"You said if I do good deeds, I'll make friends!"

It would be reassuring if Sato Hana, a bloomed magical girl, came along.

Even if it became dangerous, she could prevent the worst-case scenario.

‘…It should be fine.’

I couldn’t think any further in the urgent situation.

“Alright. Let’s go!”

I, Ichika, and Hana rushed out of the shop.

Chapter 19 : Kabukicho Battle

To define the magical girl of [Machine Gun] described in the original work in one word, she was a ‘fanatic’.

Fujimoto Sumire, who commanded the magical girls in place of Fujimoto Eiji, who had already died in the story.

[Machine Gun] was described as a character deeply infatuated with her.

She was a magical girl who bloomed on the path of struggle through the glass stars of unbloomed 1-star magical girls collected by the alliance. So she remained loyal to Sumire and tried to massacre the magical girls of FLAG until the moment of her death in the story.

As if running away from something.

Like a clown performing a play.

[Glory to you, Leader!]

[Thank you, Leader! Please watch over us!]

[This power you’ve given us! We’ll use it for you!]

[Machine guns… are love!!]

She only showed superficial loyalty while imitating a madwoman.

She died shouting at Sumire to look at her until the very end.

* * *

Whoosh—

“Yahoo!!”

“H-Hana-chan! Let’s go together!!”

[Swiftness] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Flash Girl

Sato Hana was running while enveloped in dazzling light, leaping over building rooftops.

A tail of light stretching over tens of meters behind her.

It looked as if a yellow meteor was passing by.

Even though I was chasing after her by casting Blink every second with the overwhelming output of a born 3-star magical girl, I could only see her back.

‘It’s just like imagining someone chasing after you, leaping between buildings outside the window every time you ride the subway.’

A sudden idle thought.

That’s how amazing Hana’s performance was.

Even when the distance between buildings was over ten meters, Hana broke through the air, leaving a tail of light. I was more surprised by her performance showing mobility surpassing Blink.

‘How can a born 1-star have this much output, even if she’s bloomed.’

Considering that unbloomed born 1-star magical girls get tired after using basic magic a few times, this was an astonishing level.

Whoosh—

Whoosh—

Whoosh—

Like hopping across stepping stones between building rooftops.

A high-rise building appeared in front of the yellow meteor rushing with a sharp sound cutting through the air.

“Hana-chan! Let’s go around!!”

“Ahaha! It’s okay!!”

Hana, smiling brightly at me, continued to rush while increasing her speed.

As her speed increased.

The sound of air brushing her shoulders grew louder, making a threatening noise.

Whooshhhh—

The high-rise building was now so close that it couldn’t be avoided even if she turned as much as possible.

I urgently tried to protect Hana with psychic power. But I had to stop due to the amazing sight that unfolded next.

Fwoosh!

Tap tap tap tap tap—

Hana lightly kicked off the building on the opposite side of the high-rise and went up.

Her speed didn’t decrease at all despite the sudden change in direction.

She stuck to the high-rise building and easily broke through the vertical wall, going up.

A girl running towards the sky.

‘It would be a big problem if I forcibly try to follow.’

It was obvious that if I forcibly tried to imitate that, all the surrounding buildings would be smashed by my psychic power, so I obediently turned back to the original route we were going to take.

‘Th-This is…’

A performance that was hard to believe was from a born 1-star.

I could only watch in astonishment.

‘Sato Hana is special.’

There was no description of such a powerful born 1-star in the original work.

There were descriptions of magical girls overwhelming others of the same rank according to the magic power they absorbed through blooming or fighting. But showing such overwhelming output from the beginning compared to those of the same rank was only seen in 2-star girls like Fujimoto Sumire or Ichika.

“Hey! Leader! Sato! How could you leave me behind!”

Ichika, who had fallen slightly behind, finally caught up and shouted in a resentful voice.

Ichika had less output than me, who was pushing through with raw power.

And she was less skilled at using Blink than me except in combat, so she had been lagging behind for tens of minutes.

“Really!”

Pop

“What a!”

Pop

“Troublesome situation!”

Ichika, appearing with flashes through Blink, poured out complaints.

“I agree, Ichika.”

“Hikari-chan! I can see smoke ahead!”

“Looks like we’re almost there.”

“They really made a mess!”

Hana, who had gone far ahead, gradually adjusted her speed and approached us.

A straight line from Yokohama to Shinjuku where Kabukicho is.

We had run tens of kilometers and finally arrived at a place where Kabukicho was visible.

“Good thing we didn’t take the train.”

“Heh, it’s not as chaotic as I thought. We’re not too late.”

“Uu, bad people doing bad things!”

Ichika clicked her tongue seeing that sight, and Hana made a trumpet shape with both hands and made a boo-boo sound.

Us, standing in a row on top of a building.

Traces of destruction and smoke rising in the distance.

In our eyes, we could vaguely see a fluorescent orange dot wandering through the streets of Kabukicho like sewing, and the figure of an armor continuing its majestic march on the plaza boulevard far away.

‘As expected, since it’s in the middle of the city, the police have already appeared.’

It seems the police who had arrived earlier tried to stop them but failed.

Barricades were scattered messily in the middle of Kabukicho, having failed to stop them. Armed forces couldn’t approach easily due to the confused crowd and situation.

“What should we do, leader?”

“We have to stop them.”

“Alright.”

What we could see was an armored robot and a motorcycle.

It bothered me that we couldn't see Machine Gun.

For now, stopping the rampage of those two magical girls and rescuing the involved civilians was the urgent priority.

Flash!

Colorless starlight.

Green starlight.

Two starlights sparkled where we were.

After the starlight passed, both I and Ichika changed into our bloomed magical girl forms. And I removed the illusion magic curtain I had put on our group earlier.

Our appearance revealed again.

It would be better to reveal ourselves to draw attention from the group claiming to be an organization created by the magical girl of [Beginning].

'To prevent further damage, I need to bring this area under my control.'

I jumped from the building towards the direction of Kabukicho street while holding my unique weapon, a staff.

The first thing I practiced to survive against the magical girl of [War].

Large-scale illusion barrier magic.

[Deception] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Dream World

Wide Area Type

Ching!

A huge 10-meter square prism appeared above my head, shining in various colors.

The square prism rose into the sky and quickly moved to the center of the airspace above Kabukicho.

A cross-shaped crack appeared in the center of the square.

Eight pieces, divided into 4 each on the top and bottom, scattered.

Pop!

Pop!

Pop!

Eight prisms, quickly taking their positions all over Kabukicho, emitted rainbow-colored light to each other and connected.

Like a colorful constellation, the connected starlight.

The huge starlight domain connected in this way expanded from points to lines, from lines to planes.

“Whoa, what’s this?!”

“What, what are they trying to do?”

“Today’s really gone crazy!”

As the barrier formed, my consciousness expanded and I could hear people’s surprised voices seeing the barrier engraved around them.

This place is now my domain.

It’s connected to my mental image.

What I imagine in my mind is an illusion.

A warning to leave this place.

-I am the magical girl of [Beginning].

-Please escape following the guidance of this message.

-The group currently causing a disturbance is impersonating me.

-I have no intention of harming others.

-Escape from here.

I repeatedly showed warnings and phrases echoing in the citizens' minds with my voice.

"Wh-What on earth is this…?"

"What should we do?"

"Is this real?"

Doubt.

Hesitation.

People couldn't believe the message because those girls causing the disturbance claimed to be part of an organization created by the magical girl of [Beginning].

The main culprits causing the disturbance claimed to be [Beginning]'s subordinates, but now the leader [Beginning] was telling them to run away.

'This is taking too long.'

Snap!

I deployed a new illusion.

A familiar face of a police officer I had seen before.

"This is the police! Please follow the words of the magical girl of [Beginning]!"

"They haven't gone on a full rampage yet! Please evacuate in an orderly manner!"

“It’s dangerous if everyone suddenly rushes out together! Orderly!”

“The police will guarantee your safety!”

“We will help you evacuate safely!”

“Please evacuate with the elderly and children!”

“Please follow the earthquake evacuation drill!”

The appearance and voice of Yamashita, the police officer I had tailed from the Metropolitan Police Department.

I activated the illusion while recalling him, and suddenly, various hot-blooded police Yamashitas wearing different police uniforms appeared all over Kabukicho and started evacuating citizens.

“If it’s the police’s words, we should believe them!”

“Think of it as an earthquake evacuation drill.”

“Sis, all our shop’s people have evacuated safely!”

“Hey cop, thanks. Come visit our shop sometime.”

Tap tap

Here and there on the street, yakuza in charge of public order gave their business cards to (fake) Yamashita or expressed gratitude as they retreated.

The fake Yamashitas responded to such citizens’ gratitude with eyes shining with a sense of justice.

“Protecting citizens is the natural duty of the police!”

An unrealistic situation of magical girls causing a disturbance.

The citizens, who had been frozen, started to treat the situation like an earthquake evacuation drill at the familiar voice of public authority.

Familiarity.

Relief.

Citizens began to escape from Kabukicho to the main streets at a quick pace. When overlapped with the image of a familiar situation, their bodies moved automatically.

‘Good.’

While controlling the hot-blooded police Yamashitas in the domain, I simultaneously deployed a new barrier magic towards the sluggishly moving armor.

Whoosh!

A 200-meter diameter illusion curtain.

A black hemispherical barrier completely blocked light from the surroundings, surrounding the ivory-colored armor.

[Nyufufufu, Uwaaah?! What is this?! Super Cool Armor No. 1!! Deploy night vision goggles!]

If they recover their vision through night vision goggles, there’s no point in trapping them in a blackout curtain.

“Damn it! Ichika! Take care of that robot! Don’t let it get out of the domain!”

“Got it! Leader!”

Tap!

Ichika jumped down the building and shot towards the armor trapped in the illusion curtain, leaving a green afterimage.

Vrooom—

‘The motorcycle’s exhaust sound is getting closer.’

Light approaching from far away.

The fluorescent orange motorcycle that had shot far away after witnessing the armor being bound by the illusion curtain was now

rushing at full speed. Even Ichika would need cover while subduing the robot.

“Hana-chan!”

“Yes! Hikari-chan!”

“Can you guide the motorcycle and lower its speed? I’m thinking of binding it like that robot.”

“Hmm, how can I stop it?”

“Try using yellow energy to press down hard on the back wheel like a pincer to stop it.”

“Aha! Like this?”

Crunch

Hana crumpled a pile of steel plates like paper with yellow psychic power and smiled brightly.

“…”

I was momentarily speechless at the spectacular performance she had been showing.

“Yeah, you can do it a bit weaker than that.”

“Got it! Magical Girl Sato Hana, moving out!”

“Be careful. I’ll keep watching and help you.”

“Mm! Don’t worry, Hikari-chan!”

A yellow meteor shooting out with a smile.

Whoosh-

Hana rushed towards the motorcycle like a streak of meteor.

A scene reminiscent of jousting.

The two starlights were approaching each other in a straight line.

‘Still, it’s worrying to send Hana alone…’

I detached my consciousness and sent 2 clones to follow Hana.

And while watching the situation of evacuating citizens, I monitored through the rest of my clones to block as many variables of this situation as possible.

Chapter 20 : Kabukicho Battle

“Hoeh?! Kohane?! Nana-chan will come to rescue you!!”

Vroom!

Vroom!

Vroooooom—

A delicate voice that didn’t match the rough exhaust sound.

From far away, an incredible engine sound was heard along with the sound of the bike’s throttle being turned to the max.

The girl on the fluorescent orange bike who had been darting around the streets of Kabukicho.

Nanami rushed in a straight line, waving starlight, to rescue her friend who had been trapped inside the black hemispherical curtain.

‘Wh-What on earth is that?!’

It looked like a giant had trapped a cockroach under a rice bowl.

It was the moment Nanami hesitated, startled by its enormous size.

Whoosh—

A yellow flash approaching from far away.

The flash that rushed towards Nanami at an incredible speed turned as if it had been waiting and started running parallel.

A girl rushing so fast that threatening wind sounds came from her arms and legs cutting through the air.

She chased after the bike with her side tail trailing like a meteor shower's tail.

"Hey! Toot toot! Bad big sister! Slow down right now!"

"You're chasing a bike by running?!"

A girl running parallel to the bike.

Nanami was astonished once again at this surreal sight.

Hana, enveloped in yellow energy, avoided obstacles in her path by running along building exteriors. Therefore, her speed wasn't at all behind the bike rushing in low flight.

Clunk

Clunk

Hana stretched out her fingers while fiercely pursuing. And slowly, yellow energy began to envelop the bike's rear wheel.

Clunk

Clunk

The bike's speed gradually decreased with a stiff metallic sound.

Feeling her speed decrease, Nanami changed course in panic. And she shot the fluorescent orange bike while pulling the throttle as much as possible.

Vroom—

Vroom—

Vrooooom—

Amidst the rough exhaust sounds trying to escape from the yellow flash, Nanami lamented with a tearful face.

Feeling pathetic that such a kid was holding her back.

Frustrated by her own speed running parallel with mere running.

“What on earth is this kid?!”

“Eek! Who’re you calling a kid! I’m a proper magical girl!”

“Kohane-chan! Hurry and come out to help!! This kid is too persistent!!”

“That’s mean! You’ll get a red sticker for saying bad words!”

Whoosh—

Vroooooom—

One girl leaving a fluorescent orange trajectory with a bike scattering starlight in the air.

One girl leaving a long tail of yellow flash while traversing ground and walls.

The two girls rushed side by side.

They darted around, frantically passing countless people, signs, and buildings.

A frantic rush where the surroundings were no longer clearly visible, as if the paint of a landscape painting had been broadly spread.

At the end of the rush, the bike pulled ahead.

The bike that could run through the air could run a freer path.

Nanami started to shake off the yellow flash girl by using overpasses or low buildings as obstacles while turning her handle this way and that.

The gap between the two girls slowly starting to widen.

Sato Hana withdrew the psychic power that had almost reached just a moment ago.

‘Ugh… flying through the sky is cheating!’

Hana looked up at the fluorescent orange bike with a tearful face.

‘And I talked so big to Hikari-chan!’

Hana, who had been strongly confident about ‘running fast’ following the whispers of the yellow star since the moment she bloomed, didn’t want to be embarrassed like this in front of her friend Hikari.

[Hana-chan!]

“Huh? Hikari-chan?”

Her friend’s voice suddenly heard.

Hana looked up and saw Hikari’s clone watching her from the rooftop of a tall building in the distance, wearing a mask.

[I’ll guide the path with illusions, so stick as close as you can and slow her down!]

“Hikari-chan! Can’t we just grab her like the robot?”

[I’ve tried a few times, but she escapes before it activates, so we need to slow her down first.]

“How about squashing her like a fly?”

[…The goal isn’t to kill her indiscriminately, but to make her face consequences.]

“Okay! Got it! We have to make her receive punishment like we do at school, right?”

Gathering energy at the tips of both feet.

Lightly pressing both arms to her body.

Lowering her body.

Shifting all her center of gravity forward.

Full-speed sprint.

An extreme posture that seemed like she'd lose balance if she turned even once.

A precarious posture that seemed like she'd fall forward if she stopped even once.

Like an arrow shot forward.

Like a meteor flying straight ahead.

Whoosh—

The sound of air threateningly brushed past her ears.

In that sound, it seemed like the yellow star was whispering that it was okay, that she could run even faster.

"Bad big sisters who cause trouble for others get spanked!!"

A yellow meteor shower shot with a sharp sound cutting through the wind.

The fluorescent orange bike, aware of this, tried to brake and turn the handle to change direction, but had to stop seeing the road condition right ahead.

"Hoeh?! What's this now?!"

"Wow! This is that thing! Amazing!"

Rumble rumble

Moving buildings.

The cityscape with buildings rising moved like a single organism.

They blocked alleys and side streets like walls.

And absorbed everything except the road the two girls were running on.

A straight line.

The horizon.

A single path.

Before Nanami's eyes, who had been frantically rushing through alleys and streets until now, only a straight road stretching beyond the horizon was visible.

"Hieeeek?!"

To Nanami, unfamiliar with illusions, this scene was just a huge nightmare causing panic.

Nanami, whose vision had narrowed due to panic, just shot forward.

A pure speed competition.

Hana finally smiled at the competition taking place on equal terms.

"Ahaha! In just running, I won't lose!"

Arms moving dazzlingly.

Feet running swiftly.

Due to the afterimages emitted from her two legs endlessly explosively accelerating, Sato Hana became the form of a complete meteor.

The yellow meteor rushed forward to stop the bike.

Nanami's shoulder and Hana's shoulder finally started to overlap side by side again.

The narrowing distance.

"Now, now I can reach it!"

Hana tried to extend her psychic power to the rear wheel, narrowing the distance that had been just barely out of reach until now.

"Just a little!! Just a little more!!"

“No!! I can’t stop the bike!!!”

Nanami screamed while pulling hard on the bike’s throttle.

The front of the bike’s body rising up.

Simultaneously deploying fluorescent orange starlight as a foothold.

Creating a new road by herself.

The bike turning 180 degrees like a roller coaster, stepping on a curved foothold created over terrain with nothing.

The bike that instantly changed direction from front to back brushed past where Hana was.

“…”

Hana, dumbfounded watching the back of the bike shot in the completely opposite direction.

Hikari’s voice was heard in her ears again.

[Not yet!]

[Deception] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Dream World

Rumble rumble

The straight road was no longer a plain.

Like stairs to heaven rising towards the sky.

The balance of the bike Nanami was driving was collapsing on the unfamiliar road with a steep slope.

“Ugh! The slope…”

Nanami confused in the cognition changed by illusion.

Thinking this was the chance, black curtains were created in the

direction Nanami was heading.

But she skillfully avoided them while grasping the throttle even in her confusion.

[Now, Hana-chan!! You have to slow her down!!]

“Ahaha!”

Sato Hana regained her confidence.

Because it was such a familiar form of track.

Well.

She had practiced countless times in her head running towards the sky since the day her legs couldn’t move.

[Swiftness] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Flash Girl

There was a streak of meteor chasing after the bike that had lost balance on the unfamiliar form of road.

What lay ahead on the path the starlight was heading towards was a track stretching out to the sky.

The yellow meteor that had once fallen to that low place regained its light and advanced to where it should originally be.

Rumble rumble!

“Kyaa?! N-No!! Please!! Don’t stop the bike!!!”

“The game of tag in the corridor ends now, big sister!”

The yellow starlight shot from Hana’s hand slowly started to grasp the rear wheel of Nanami’s bike.

Grip

Grip

Grip

Clunk!

“Now, Hikari-chan!!”

[Well done, Hana-chan!]

At the end of the chase that seemed like it would continue forever, the bike that finally slowed down was covered by a black curtain.

A complete prison of illusion.

There, Nanami, whose cognition was completely distorted, completely collapsed.

Crash bang-!

The bike tumbled down miserably.

“Hic?! Is that big sister really alive?”

[A bloomed 2-star won’t die from something like that.]

“Phew, that’s a relief. If she dies, she can’t receive a spanking! She has to be punished!”

[…]

What appeared when the curtain was lifted was the wreckage of the crumpled and tumbled bike. And the figure of Nanami collapsed on the road, panting.

Nanami was muttering half-unconscious through the visor of her helmet that had somehow opened.

“If the bike… stops… Mom will… me…”

“…”

Seeing this, Hana hesitated for a moment. Then she approached Nanami and started patting her head.

The sight of gently patting the cat-eared helmet Nanami was wearing.

[…Hana-chan is kind.]

“Ugh, why won’t this come off?”

[Huh?]

Clunk!

When she completely closed the helmet’s visor that wouldn’t come off well because it was crumpled, Nanami’s muttering could no longer be heard.

“Mom said that making excuses saying ‘This is why I did wrong’ after doing bad things is the worst!”

[…I see.]

* * *

Kohane, trapped in the black curtain, was looking for a way to escape while moving the armor.

[Nyufufufu! Super Cool Armor No. 1 is an all-purpose armor that can deal with even such emergency situations!]

Click!

Pshhh—

[It’s literally super cool!]

“Oh really? To my eyes, it looks terribly lame.”

[Nyufu?!]

Kohane hurriedly discovered through night vision goggles that there was a girl in front of her armor.

That girl was wearing an old-fashioned sailor uniform.

And she had a green special attack uniform draped over her

shoulders.

The green girl.

She was quietly looking at her armor in the darkness.

[W-Well, originally the eyes of lowly ordinary people can't tell the difference.]

Even while speaking, Kohane felt her heart pounding with tension.

The green gleam in the eyes of the girl in front.

Because those burning eyes seemed to be looking straight at her inside the armor.

"If I beat that lame armor flat with the hands of a lowly ordinary person. I think your and my thoughts might become similar."

[How dare you say you'll smash the Super Cool Armor No. 1 that I made with big bro, no, my assistant!!]

Whirr—

A threatening red light.

The red mono-eye shone in the darkness and all the armor's drive systems were activated.

The brightly shining armor.

Click

Click

Pshhh—

[Nyufufufu… I was just going to skip the performance demonstration today and only do a march dedicated to the magical girl of [Beginning]…]

Whirr!

[I'm looking forward to showing how amazing abilities it has against a magical girl!]

"That [Beginning] is my boss, you fool."

[Nonsense!!]

Boom!

The armor rushed threateningly towards Ichika.

Chapter 21 : Kabukicho Battle

[Nonsense!]

The ivory-colored armor aimed its rifles in both hands at Ichika.

The girl visible on the dim screen through night vision goggles was looking straight at her. And when she stood face to face with her.

Kohane couldn't help but be startled by the sudden sound.

The armor's hostile alert system, which hadn't sounded even when the police stopped them, was now ringing loudly.

Beep!

Beep!

Beep!

A warning in a dry mechanical voice.

The cockpit flashing red.

-Less than 5% chance of effective hit.

-Immediate withdrawal from combat area recommended.

-Retreat while spreading fire recommended.

'I-Is this a reasonable figure for my first time fighting in armor?'

Although Kohane felt her hands and feet going cold.

Because she had to get past the girl in front of her, she aimed at the ground and pulled the firing trigger.

Squeeze

As Kohane put strength into her small finger gripping the trigger, a huge firing sound rang out with recoil that shook the cockpit.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

The black curtain flickered with sparks illuminating the darkness in time with the huge explosion sounds.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

The inside of the curtain, brightened by the occasional sparks, gradually filled with gunpowder smoke. And the faint shadow of the girl visible through the smoke emitted from the gunpowder didn't disappear.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Firepower that would make an ordinary human's whole body explode with one shot.

Dozens of large-caliber bullets devastated the surroundings, leaving an enormous amount of dust.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Tick—

Tick—

The armor, having emptied its magazine in an instant, stopped firing with a deflating sound.

Kohane quickly pressed the reload button while continuing to watch the direction where she had been standing.

Gulp.

'Th-This much should have taken care of her, right? Better if she ran away.'

Kohane judged that the opponent would have retreated because she

had spread fire with full power right from the start. But her hands and feet were still trembling, and she kept swallowing dry saliva with her thin throat.

An instinctive fear that if she didn't subdue that girl here, she would be done for immediately. Because of that, her hands gripping the triggers on both sides turned white but never let go.

So she could be ready at any time.

Kohane felt pathetic for being completely frozen like a scared mouse despite riding in the giant armor.

'What a sight, getting like this just from making eye contact once…!'

Click.

Click.

Having finished reloading and returned to full readiness, the armor still had its muzzles aimed forward.

[…]

The alarm sound that seemed to be shouting at the armor to run away quickly.

Thanks to that, she fired wildly enough to empty the rifle magazines while extremely tense.

Beep!

Beep!

Beep!

The red alert in the cockpit still flashing.

"…"

This much should be enough.

Although the armor's alert system was still sounding.

If she had made this much of a mess, she should have run away.

Kohane hoped desperately that was the case.

Beep!

Beep!

Beep!

Contrary to Kohane's wishes, the armor's alert system continued to sound.

"…"

The dust slowly settled.

There was nothing inside.

With the silence that returned, only the armor was in the black curtain.

Beep!

Beep!

Beep!

Nothing happened even if she waited quietly.

Kohane muttered slightly, containing her wish.

"D-Did I get her?"

Kohane, using the armor's weapons for the first time, looked around moving the control stick with trembling hands from excitement and a sense of liberation.

Whirr

Along with the motor sound from the joints, the armor turned smoothly in place.

After carefully checking the image on the monitor, Kohane confirmed that no one was there.

“Phew.”

A sigh of relief.

Cold sweat flowing from her forehead.

Kohane wiggled her small feet and switched the armor back to normal mode.

‘I wasted some bullets, but they can be slowly replenished with starlight…’

They were bullets that should have been used to smash the unsightly Kabukicho with her friends.

But there’s more armor armament, so it should be enough.

[Nyufu. Wh-What, it’s nothing, right? As expected, super coo…]

“Are you done shooting?”

Right next to her.

Not from the armor’s camera.

A voice heard through the wall.

The girl was right beside her.

With green eyes shining brightly in the darkness, Ichika turned her head towards the mono-eye with night vision deployed. Grabbing the body’s protrusions with one hand, she was looking at the cockpit with a calm expression.

“Eek?!”

Kohane thought she might have wet herself a little at this moment if she hadn’t been riding in the armor. But she couldn’t stop the scream that burst out.

[Uwaaaaah?!]

Kohane instinctively activated the booster while stepping on the pedals with both feet at full power.

The joints of the ivory-colored armor glowed brightly with the suddenly increased output.

Heat that could be felt even in the cockpit.

Steam spewing from the engine's cooler that had heated up.

Pshhh-!

Whirr—

The boosters on both sides of the ivory-colored armor's backpack heated up and spewed blue flames.

Whoosh

With the help of boosters mounted on both shoulder ends and the backpack, the sluggish movements of the armor became agile.

'It's too close to use the rifle!'

Kohane pressed the close combat mode button on the control stick while simultaneously moving the acceleration pedal.

The armor, slightly lifted off the ground, moved this way and that trying to shake off Ichika. And deployed the blades stored in both arm compartments.

Blades shining with ivory-colored light.

Tremendous vibration ringing in the ears due to high-output energy.

Shing!

Ichika smiled contentedly even as she saw the blades rushing towards her.

Isn't a fight supposed to have give and take of blows, not just

exchanging projectiles?

“Ha, you should have done that from the start.”

[G-Get away!]

Rushing huge blades.

Chilling heat.

Ichika twisted her body to avoid the huge blades clumsily threatening her as if trying to catch a fly with a swatter, sticking to the body.

But the following consecutive attacks.

“Oops.”

Ichika made a weak sound while watching the attacks, then lightly jumped from the body to avoid them.

Whirr!

Whirr—

The red mono-eye left a red afterimage like a long ribbon.

The scene of the 10-meter-sized armor rushing at the delicate girl with threatening blades mounted on both hands.

That scene had an impact worthy of a sci-fi horror movie.

But at this moment, the relationship between prey and hunter was reversed.

Ichika looked at the approaching armor.

She took a deep breath, concentrating on the center of her body.

“Haaah-“

[Freedom] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Fighting Instinct

Green energy enveloped Ichika's body, rising up and turning into a vortex, dominating the surrounding area.

Inside the dark curtain.

Where the red mono-eye was rushing, a green storm appeared.

She became a storm to meet the armor's attack.

Fragments of sidewalk blocks scattered on the road.

Pieces of barricades crushed by the armor.

Holes dug by the fired bullets.

All these whispering information.

They were telling the most optimal route to victory.

The momentum is fierce, but the enemy is full of openings.

The key to victory seen among them is a single counter. It was a single flexibility to break the threatening iron man's momentum.

Softness can control hardness.

The soft can subdue the strong.

The iron man's momentum was powerful.

It was like a huge spear tip.

According to the will of the one holding the spear shaft far away.

It was a form of destruction stabbing straight towards Ichika.

A form of destruction that cannot be blocked by a human body.

The stone floor breaking with each step.

The air being cut by the fiercely burning blades.

Whoosh—

A realm that only a few geniuses who have attained enlightenment can glimpse.

It was violence of unreasonable mass comparable to that. But the straight line of force contained no subtlety at all.

‘Therefore, it only advances forward.’

In the gap of consciousness that seemed to stretch a moment into a minute.

Within it, Ichika gently spread both hands, extending one towards the sky and one towards the ground.

Drawing the taijitu.

Between Heaven and Earth was Human.

It was the most primal implementation of the taijitu that her master had taught.

-Strength and softness always coexist, and the greater the strength, the more vulnerable it becomes to the softness on the other side.

In Ichika’s consciousness with her eyes closed, this was no longer a threatening iron man.

A worn-out wooden dummy for training at the temple that can only perform straight attacks.

The wooden dummy had now completely approached and charged towards her.

Whirr!

Whoosh!

[This is the end!!]

The sword thrust by the wooden dummy.

A simple sword.

Simple force without any enlightenment.

Just before that force approached.

A thread-like gap.

Ichika twisted and deflected the side of the sword thrust by the wooden dummy.

Eight Trigrams Palm.

In the subtlety of the taijitu, the wooden dummy's sword was twisted.

And simultaneously, all the force that had been deployed began to twist along with it.

The armor lost all its momentum in the taijitu and fell, unable to even overcome its own power.

Crunch!

Screech!

Crackle!

The armor crumpling and falling as if caught in a whirlwind.

In the gap existing between the armor's attacks.

Twisting the force spewing from the armor and instantly transmitting it to the joints.

One of the armor's arms burst off.

The armor that lost its balance collapsed with a roar, keeping its advancing momentum.

Rumble!

Crackle!

Crack!

[Uwaaah?! Crazy!! With bare hands!?]

Crash bang!

Thud!

Thud!

Pshhh—

Just before completely losing posture while rolling on the ground.

Kohane stepped on the pedals with all the strength in her legs, and held onto the control stick that was thrashing as if to throw her small body away.

Thanks to Kohane's desperate control, the armor rolled on the ground a few times and then quickly regained its posture. But the aftermath was too significant to ignore.

[Huff, huff, ugh… my precious armor…]

Unlike the majestic momentum at first, with just one attack, one arm had completely become a rag and it was in a mess, covered in dust from the ground.

The joints here and there damaged by being swept up in Ichika's counter, emergency lights in the cockpit repeatedly flashing recommending evacuation.

[I-If it's like this, I can't show off the armor to my assistant… To get my assistant out of there…]

Kohane, who had been muttering for a moment, growled while gathering her wits.

[I don't want to kill people so I wasn't using it, but I have no choice!]

"You were firing bullets just fine earlier, what are you saying?"

Ignoring Ichika's answer, Kohane swung her fist to press the switch in the middle of the control stick that was covered with hard protective

glass.

Crack-!

Whirr!

Click!

The gun barrel that had been boasting its presence on the armor's back.

It finally came out of the backpack and mounted on one of the armor's shoulders.

The secret weapon that had been saved to use as the final salute.

It was creating a threatening atmosphere, reflecting the light of the armor's mono-eye in the darkness.

[Super Cool Armor No. 1's strongest weapon! I'll bring out the Super Cool Cannon No. 1!]

Kohane warned, squeezing out her delicate voice.

[If you get hit by this, you'll really die even if you're a strong magical girl! It's better to get out of the way!]

Ichika replied with a deflated laugh.

"You should open a naming agency with our leader."

[What nonsense are you saying! Does my words sound like a joke to you?!]

-Super Cool Cannon No. 1 loading complete.

The mechanical voice saying preparations were complete.

Kohane bit her lower lip hard.

Now this was all that was left.

[…Don't say I didn't warn you!]

Click!

Boom!

Light spewing out and the cannon hitting right in front.

Flash.

Roar.

Destruction.

Only light filled the curtain that was full of darkness.

And the approaching aftershock and vibration.

While feeling the armor shaking from the aftershock of the cannon exploding at close range not even 50 meters away, Kohane desperately looked at the monitor to check the situation.

‘Please… please…!’

It was about time to stop.

Kohane hadn’t resolved with her friends just to be held back in a place like this.

Smash that unsightly Kabukicho.

She had to be recognized as a proud magical girl by the noble magical girl of [Beginning] and let people know that they existed.

The settled smoke.

Green eyes.

Their eyes met.

[Aaaah!! Please!!! Stop already!!!]

Kohane activated all the armor’s armaments while wailing.

Ratatatatatatata

Whoosh! Whoosh!

Click- Boom!

Endless explosions.

Endless sounds.

But Ichika, momentarily visible through the gunpowder smoke and dust clouds, was approaching one step with each flash.

The green eyes that had somehow come right in front.

Kohane moved the control stick while sobbing, but it was useless.

Ichika, who had lightly landed on the ivory-colored body, filled her fist with green energy and struck repeatedly.

The green storm was contained in her fists, drawing numerous trajectories while slowly crushing the armor.

Bang!

Crack!

Thud!

The cockpit shook and the armor slowly crumpled with each strike.

The armor's body damaged to the point of no longer being able to perform control.

Boom!

Crash!

Crack!

Vibration.

Warning sounds.

Red screen.

Evacuation recommendation broadcast.

Inside, Kohane could only scream in panic.

[Uwah!! S-Stop it!!]

Bang!

Bang!

Her body shaking from the impact felt through the dented metal plate with each punch.

With the second impact, she felt the armor creaking.

[Get away!!]

She tried to remove Ichika with the armor's remaining hand.

But Ichika shook it off with a light step and prepared for the final attack by raising one leg high.

Green energy seeped into the tip of the leg completely split towards the sky.

Thunder sounded from the toe striking down towards the ground.

"Let's see your face!"

Boom!

With one vertical stomping, the metal plate protecting the cockpit finally dented.

Kohane gripping the control stick in terror.

Ichika standing in a majestic posture.

The eyes of the two finally met.

"Eek?!"

"This is a total baby face, isn't it?"

Ichika, who let out a laugh at the unexpectedly small girl's appearance, reached out and grabbed the girl's collar, pulling her up.

"Let… go…!"

Kohane resisted with her feet in slippers towards Ichika who had grabbed her loose gown, but Ichika didn't budge.

"Stay still, you!"

Thwack!

"…"

A righteous flick that struck the girl's plump forehead, and the girl's kicking that had been continuing resistance stopped and went limp.

Ichika leisurely walked out of the curtain, dragging the limp girl by her collar.

"Oh, nice curtain setup."

A fiercer battle than imagined.

Ichika, who had been worried about harming passersby outside, thought it was fortunate that the effects of the battle hadn't spread outside the curtain.

"Leader! We're done here!"

"…"

"Leader?"

"…"

"Seems busy?"

Drag drag

Ichika held the limp girl in one hand.

She trudged towards the building where the leader had given orders.

Chapter 22 : Machine Gun of Love

The girls gathered in the square had many things in common.

They hated their homes.

They hated the smell of trash bags left to rot throughout the house.

They hated the gritty rice of convenience store lunch boxes eaten alone.

When they ran away from their unbearable homes and headed to the square.

They wondered.

Why do adults say they have no money but go to that street to spend money?

Why do they throw away the things they liked and head to that street?

Why did they go out like that and never come back?

The three girls waited, each holding an item their unreturning families had liked.

Praying that their families would discover the items they held and return like before.

They waited for years in the square overlooking that street.

* * *

On the building rooftop, someone had followed me.

A curly-haired girl wearing an aviator jacket who introduced herself as Rena.

She greeted me with a smile as if glad to see me, her eyes covered by aviation goggles.

“It’s an honor to meet the noble magical girl of [Beginning]!”

“…”

I was slowly becoming angry listening to what she was saying.

What? Noble? Honor? Is she in her right mind?

The faces of people fleeing in terror.

The expressions of people clinging to and crying to the police who had saved them.

I was angry at this person grinning after causing a disturbance in front of all these innocent people.

A rage that hadn’t risen even towards the security guards who had shot at me.

That rage was boiling up at this moment.

Anger welled up towards these people who had nearly harmed, or may have harmed, innocent people.

“Don’t talk nonsense. To have such an attitude after causing a disturbance.”

“Ah… that’s true.”

“You knew and still did it?”

“Don’t worry! Except for destroying Kabukicho buildings, we promised with Kohane and Nanami not to hurt any civilians!”

Rena spoke with a bright smile as if it was no big deal.

“We just… vented a little until you came.”

“Vented?!”

I felt a headache coming on as I recalled Rena’s rampage I had seen on my phone.

To call it merely venting when using magical girl powers.

“There’s no way no one would get hurt when firing guns in the city center.”

“They were blanks, so don’t worry. We decided not to engage in full-scale violence until we saw you.”

“…”

I couldn’t fathom this person’s psychology at all.

Rena was a character who showed an exceptionally incomprehensible madness even among those who appeared in the original work. From her past mentioned in the story, there was only a reference that she had received the power of blooming gathered through struggle from the alliance and carried out something alone.

‘Does she think she’s indebted to me since that last broadcast?’

I felt these people, who revealed pure but sharp malice and worship, were more threatening than those who had approached to harm me.

‘If left alone, they might cause an even bigger accident.’

Magical girls who precariously maintain the line between reason and emotion.

I thought that if I just let this moment pass, they might reach a point of no return.

Why do they seek my approval for destroying Kabukicho?

Why do they have such a solemn resolve to destroy Kabukicho?

What is the true heart of these people?

“…”

Let's give these people one chance.

Is what they have pure malice, or just a momentary impulse?

Tap!

Tap!

I tapped my staff on the ground, and saw Rena focus on me at that sound.

"Why do you think you need my approval to destroy Kabukicho?"

"That street…"

Rena couldn't continue speaking for a moment as she looked at Kabukicho spread out beyond the building.

The street that lured people with its glamorous night scenery was now filled with cold silence due to the commotion in broad daylight.

Numerous emotions flashed through Rena's eyes as she just stared at such a street.

Anger

Sadness

Pain

Despair

Loneliness

"That street swallowed everything."

"…"

"Our happiness, past, dreams, future, everything."

"…"

"To us who were slowly rotting away in the shadows hidden by the

light that street emits…”

Rena pointed at me with slightly trembling fingers.

An overflowing expression.

An expression wanting to scream.

An expression hoping for someone to understand.

Rena looked at me with a face mixed with numerous expressions and slowly placed her trembling hand on her chest, closing her eyes.

It was reminiscent of a praying posture.

Not blessing or wishing for someone.

Just a posture of depending on and worshipping someone.

“You… only you affirmed that we could shine on our own.”

Was Rena recalling the dream of the debutante?

“Unlike that street that treated us as non-existent and only took from us, you gave us dreams and power. We wanted to have our feelings acknowledged by you, at least.”

Or was it some nightmare from the past?

Rena’s blue eyes, looking at me with a desperate expression while slowly removing her goggles, were impressive.

“Can’t you watch over us as we are, just once?”

“…”

“If you acknowledge our feelings just once, we’ll do anything you say.”

What she showed was madness full of anger that had subtly rotted and grown moldy.

Even if they ran amok to their hearts’ content after removing all

civilians from that street, another Kabukicho would just spring up somewhere else.

I don't know what kind of past they have, but I could be certain that destroying the street wouldn't bring back what they lost.

Nevertheless, anger that won't be resolved unless acted upon right now.

They must have been going through hellish days with that anger piling up, slowly filling their hearts over a not short period of time.

If there was a single ray of hope in those hellish days, for these girls it must have been that unreasonable anger.

Because they knew all too well that it was unreasonable, they just wanted to vent their anger hiding behind my name. That's why I couldn't affirm it.

"That can't be a reason to harm other people."

"…"

"Then are you confident?"

"Confident in what?"

"Confident that you can restrain yourself even if emptiness comes after giving in to that anger."

Rena answered confidently with a deflated laugh as if she had received an obvious question.

"Of course! No matter how much irredeemable trash we are, if we just destroy that street…"

"It's not just that street that made you fall into despair."

"…"

"Aren't the people in that street what you really want to get rid of?"

"B-But to you, the magical girl of [Beginning]…"

The desire to have their anger acknowledged as justified and the impulse to take unreasonable revenge right now were tangled messily, falling into contradiction.

I tried to see their true hearts while pointing out that contradiction.

“If you were worried about tarnishing my name, you shouldn’t have thought of getting permission through my name.”

“…”

“You’re cowards. Just cowards trying to avoid responsibility by pretending to believe in me.”

Rena’s face was gradually contorting.

The superficial smile she had maintained even while disparaging themselves as trash vanished fleetingly, and waves of distrust could be seen slowly building up between her raised eyes.

‘Yes, I was just a refuge for them.’

The anger that seemed about to burst, hidden under a thin mask.

Perhaps that was the responsibility they had passed on to Sumire in the original work. If so, what I needed to show was to confirm whether the anger they held was genuine.

“So what do you want me to do?”

“Prove it yourselves.”

Snap!

A cheerful sound rang out.

Suddenly, the space where we were standing had changed from the building rooftop to in front of Kabukicho.

“Re-Rena-chan?!”

“Rena…?!”

“You guys!”

The two girls that Hana and Ichika had subdued and brought.

Nanami and Kohane had also somehow moved next to me.

Snap!

With the cheerful sound, the glass stars in the hands of the girls who called themselves ‘Salon’ began to shine.

Glass stars emitting two brilliant lights.

Fluorescent orange

Ivory

Khaki

The starlight that had been consumed as if the earlier rampage had been an illusion was filling up and shining dazzlingly in the glass stars of three colors.

“Don’t hide behind my name, prove it yourselves.”

I pointed at Kabukicho while speaking to the girls sitting blankly holding their shining glass stars.

“Prove what you truly want to do.”

“…”

“…”

“…”

Kohane, who had been looking at me for a moment, stood up as if resolved.

Nanami, fixing her broken helmet, summoned her bike again.

Rena just staggered forward, her expression unseen.

A moment of silence.

And then a storm of destruction swept towards the street before their eyes.

Armor spewing fire.

A bike rushing out with a flash.

A shower of machine gun fire.

Click—Whirr—Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Vrooooom!

Ratatatatatatata!

Chaos ensued as the girls' nowhere-to-go anger poured onto the street of pleasure.

"Uwaaaah!!! Help me!!!"

"Good heavens, what is this?!"

"No!!! My shop… my shop!!!"

Father's memory.

Two machine guns that appeared behind Rena were smashing the roof decorated with neon signs.

People hiding inside the shops collapsed under the fallen roof.

It wouldn't allow foreign soldiers coming in to make easy women their local wives.

Mother's memory.

Nanami drove her motorcycle like a storm, smashing signs tempting passing people.

So that a young mother who might have come in dreaming of a night's escape wouldn't be captivated by the signs.

So she wouldn't disappear after meeting eyes with a biker gang there.

She didn't stop even as people fell after being hit by sign fragments.

Brother's memory.

Kohane reloaded and pulled the rifle of the armor.

Bad shops that squeeze money from innocent otaku customers while playing with their hearts.

So that her innocent brother who just liked assembling plastic models wouldn't go in there.

Even if young women came out with their cosplay outfits stained with blood.

The noise of destruction echoing through Kabukicho was a scream bursting from their wounds.

It was the cry of past times when no one had cared for them.

Every night they cried, raged, and were hurt there.

"We!!! Are!!! Here!!! Now!!!"

"Look at us!!"

"We are…!"

Children who had waited desperately for their families while holding toys in one hand had become girls while still children.

Time and souls were bound to the streets of Kabukicho.

"We are…!"

"Sob…"

"Hic…"

The girls who had been pouring out their anger without restraint sat down rubbing their chests.

The completely ruined streets of Kabukicho.

The echoes of screams and fear flowing out.

They could no longer bear all of it.

“This… this…”

“What we want…”

“This isn’t it…”

Emptiness.

Destruction to reclaim lost time and souls. But the more they burned buildings and hurt people, what was engraved was only wounds on their souls.

Because their anger was not ultimately for harming someone.

“I see.”

“Then it can still be undone.”

“It’s not too late yet.”

[Deception] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Dream World

Tap!

I lightly tapped my staff again.

Everything was an illusion.

A test to see their true hearts.

I decided to return dreams to these girls who had fallen into despair.

Chapter 23 : Machine Gun of Love

“Wh-What?!”

Rena, who had been lying face down with a despairing expression, suddenly stood up with a look of disbelief.

The traces of destruction they had just caused.

The ruins of Kabukicho, which had been full of screams and terror, disappeared without a trace, and the streets returned to their normal state.

Everything they had done vanished as if it had been a dream.

People passing through the streets were moving their steps towards the main road in an orderly manner.

I approached the girls who were surprised by the sudden return to the original scenery.

“So, do you feel better now?”

“…”

“…”

“…”

They, who had been out of their minds due to the guilt of their destructive actions, looked at me with expressions that couldn’t distinguish if this was reality. Their faces, staring blankly with tears streaming down, were no different from any other girls.

“This is reality now. You’re still just troublemakers who only caused

a disturbance in front of Kabukicho.”

“Thank… goodness.”

Hup

Nanami covered her mouth, surprised as if she couldn’t believe the words that had unconsciously come out of her mouth. And tears could be seen welling up in her eyes as she covered her mouth.

The true feelings flowing from their unconscious.

I saw, heard, and felt it.

“Oh, you kids.”

Tap

Tap

Tap

I lightly hit their heads once each with my staff, with a slight reproach.

Girls who couldn’t overcome their contradictory anger and caused a disturbance hiding under my name.

The three girls bowed their heads, shivering with relief as if they felt the reality from the pain felt on their heads.

“Why did you try to do something you’d regret so much?”

“But…”

As Kohane seemed to be trying to make excuses with her swollen eyes, I hit her protruding forehead once more with my staff.

Tap

“Ugh?! That hurts…”

While deploying the Dream World, I felt where their mental images

were heading.

It wasn't an ending achieved through revenge or destruction. Rather, it was a goal to move forward.

Kabukicho wasn't their final destination.

'As soon as they gained power, they caused a disturbance as if to vent their grudges, but even that was anger distorted over a long time.'

In the original work, no companions appeared alongside [Machine Gun].

Was she alone, unable to overcome her own contradictions, and entrusted her life's purpose to someone else?

"So, have you still not changed your mind?"

"…"

"If you're still feeling resentful, you can do more."

"…"

Rena seemed to be hesitating on how to answer my question. If so, it would be an adult's duty to provide proper direction to the wandering Rena.

There was still room for them to change, and the advice I could give them was…

* * *

"So, leader, how did you do it?"

"Do what?"

"Those guys who were advancing with the momentum to burn down Kabukicho turned into gentle lambs and turned themselves in to the police."

Ichika crossed her legs the other way and waited for my answer.

While I was drawing Rena, Kohane, and Nanami into the illusion barrier, Ichika and Hana were waiting outside, so they didn't see the whole story.

"Does the illusion magic you use have some hypnotic function that makes people change their minds?"

"If I had such a thing, I would have used it on Congressman Fujimoto and criminals."

"Well, that's true."

"I just took a bit more responsibility this time because it was partly my fault."

"How is that your fault…?"

Ichika, who was about to say something, hesitated and turned her head.

"Wow! That's amazing! Hikari-chan is a hypnotist who brightens the world!"

"Hana-chan, it's illusionist, illusionist."

"Illusionist!"

In the empty train returning to Yokohama.

I looked at Hana's side profile, who was clapping and repeatedly chanting, then turned my head to look at the scenery outside the window.

The sky dyed red by the sunset.

The city lights were turning on one by one under the twilight.

The night view of the city shining in the gradually approaching darkness.

'At least tonight, they won't see the night view they hated.'

Those who had wailed after seeing their true dreams in the Dream

World turned themselves in to the police right away.

Their real wish was not the destruction of the streets, but reunion with their families. What they truly wanted was love, not hatred.

Their dreams that had become distorted during the long time of pain.

‘I might have done the same if I were in that situation.’

While I was thinking about those kids’ hatred that didn’t feel like someone else’s business, Hana spoke to me with my complicated feelings.

“Hikari-chan, are you sad?”

“Huh?”

“You’ve had a strange expression ever since seeing those bad big sisters.”

“Is that so? Isn’t it just the usual expressionless fox eyes?”

Hana shook her head at Ichika’s indifferent words.

“Hikari-chan sometimes makes that expression when she’s really sad.”

“…”

Is this why adults say you shouldn’t show emotions in front of kids?

“Just… I feel like it’s partly my fault too.”

“How is that the leader’s fault?”

“If I had done better in a different way as the magical girl of [Beginning], I wouldn’t have stimulated those kids.”

Perhaps I needed to be prepared to take responsibility until the end if I affected this world.

The confusion that appeared right after irresponsibly throwing the wave of change and disappearing.

Even though I stopped it quickly, there were already people who had been harmed there.

Even if it was a world destined to perish anyway, they were harmed because of me long ago.

If I had risen to save all the precious people and innocent people, wouldn't there have been a better way?

Words I couldn't bring myself to say out loud stirred in my head.

"I don't think that's right. How is that the leader's fault?"

Ichika stood up abruptly and continued speaking, pointing at me.

"Not all the bad things magical girls do in the world are the leader's fault! Digging yourself into a hole like that too…"

Ichika tried to say something more but seemed unable to organize it herself and mumbled. I could feel her hesitating, afraid of hurting me by not conveying well that she just wanted to comfort me.

"Tch, sorry for yelling. I guess I got heated too."

"…"

"I'll go cool off for a bit. Sorry!"

Rattle Slam!

Silence returned to the empty subway car.

Night view and sunset, lonely silence. In it, Hana opened her mouth in a quiet voice.

"I think Ichika is angry that Hikari-chan is hurting herself."

"Yeah, I know."

Sato Hana held my hand tightly. As her warm and soft hand enveloped mine, I felt my complicated feelings gradually calming down.

“Hikari-chan.”

“Yes?”

“I was happy that Hikari-chan asked me to go help people together today.”

“…”

“Mom and Dad just worry whenever I try to do something.”

To Mr. and Mrs. Sato, Sato Hana is not a powerful magical girl, but their precious daughter who recently got up after not being able to walk for a long time.

Even though it was urgent, regret washed over me that I might have made too hasty a decision.

Regret.

As if feeling the guilt in my heart, Hana grasped my hand even tighter, interlocking our fingers.

“Thanks to Hikari-chan, I think I’ve found what I really want to do.”

“What you want to do?”

“Yes!”

Hana smiled brightly at me.

Hana’s hair seemed to shine even though she hadn’t transformed, because of the sunset.

“I want to help people in trouble with my magical girl powers!”

“…”

“Will you help me?”

“…Okay.”

“Thank you.”

This world doesn't seem to be soft enough to be fixed with just one show.

Then let's change it more.

Let's make better choices while helping and teaching a little more.

So that magical girls can properly find their own dreams.

So that someday, when everything is over, I can return smiling in front of my mother.

Let's try.

* * *

The interrogation room at the Metropolitan Police Department was filled with tension.

This was because three magical girls who had caused a disturbance recently had turned themselves in.

"So in the end, they were just kids with no connection to the magical girl of [Beginning]?"

"All three of their testimonies match, and above all, it's confirmed that they were gathered in the square at the time of that broadcast…"

"Rather, most testimonies say that the magical girl of [Beginning] focused on relief activities at the time of the incident."

"…"

"I don't understand."

The Kabukicho Incident.

Officially, the first incident caused by a supernatural ability user holding a grudge against society.

Because the three perpetrators of the incident engaged in actions closer to a show of force rather than causing casualties, there was property damage, but except for a few injured, not many casualties

occurred. However, it was an incident that raised awareness of how powerless public authority could become if supernatural ability users decided to cause a disturbance.

When public power was paralyzed and unable to function.

The girls, subdued by a mysterious group of magical girls, came to turn themselves in as if possessed by ghosts.

“That magical girl group…”

“Their testimonies also match that the magical girl of [Beginning] came directly to stop them.”

“The magical girl of [Beginning]…”

An existence that led to magical girls being found in society in just 2 months.

An existence that revealed the principle and blooming of supernatural abilities that no one had been able to uncover.

“This is like…”

Isn’t this the act of a Prometheus who first taught humanity how to use fire?

“Young Lady Fujimoto seemed to show great interest in that [Beginning].”

“Is that why she’s going so far as to conduct the interrogation herself?”

Inside the interrogation room behind the magic mirror, Fujimoto Sumire, who had entered with the status of a national magical girl special interrogation officer, was looking at the three instigators of this incident.

“…So in the end, they were just a group impersonating the name of [Beginning]… is that it?”

“…”

The intimidating presence of a girl with sharp eyes wearing plain black clothes.

Rena, Kohane, and Nanami nodded with their mouths tightly shut at her question.

“I see.”

“…”

“Somehow it seemed a bit strange. [Beginning], who seemed to follow her own beliefs, suddenly committing terrorism…”

“…Actually, we don’t really know much more than what we’ve told you so far…”

“Because of the mask, we couldn’t see the face well…”

“Is that so.”

Sumire responded in a businesslike tone and then took out various documents from the envelope she had placed on the desk in the interrogation room.

[Kanto Region Entire Supernatural Ability Crime History]

[Tokyo 23 Wards Resident Supernatural Ability User Statistics]

Although it’s being overshadowed now by the flashy disturbance these girls caused, crimes and disturbances using supernatural abilities were gradually coming to light.

“According to [Beginning], supernatural ability… magical girls are the power of dreams, right?”

“Yes…?”

“Although it’s hard to guess how she could know information that no one else could uncover.”

Sumire spoke quietly while looking at the trio.

“Even if the source of power magical girls have is a new form of

power that escapes the logic of resources, uncontrolled power tends to stagnate and run wild."

Unable to guess what this meant, everyone was blankly staring at Sumire.

"We want to create a group that can stabilize and control it."

"That's…!"

"Let's have the Fujimoto name take care of the aftermath of this Kabukicho incident."

Come under me.

"Soon, special laws targeting supernatural ability users will be enacted. This includes a law that grants sentencing through community service to supernatural ability criminals who committed crimes in situations difficult to control themselves."

I will forgive your sins.

"If it's true that magical girls' power grows stronger through dreams and goals, Fujimoto can certainly embrace that."

I will grant what you wish for.

"…"

Rena, who understood the meaning of all the words, was silent for a moment.

-What do you really want?

Our true feelings that the magical girl of [Beginning] showed us.

"I want to… find my family again."

"…I understand."

Sumire quietly opened her mouth, her eyes shining.

"Welcome to the Magical Girl Alliance."

Chapter 24 : The Big Moving Operation

July 25th

[Interview with Magical Girl Relief Corps Commemorating Full Discharge of A University Hospital ICU]

[Special Team to be Established to Respond to Magical Girl Crimes]

[Special Law on Supernatural Ability Groups Passed Unanimously by Ruling and Opposition Parties]

[Temporary Restriction Measures on Overseas Movement of Magical Girls]

The media seemed to consider it taboo to mention the incident that occurred in Kabukicho, which had been deeply connected with violent groups from the beginning.

News about the Kabukicho incident was reduced to a brief report, overshadowed by an article about a multi-vehicle collision accident that happened the next day.

It was only mentioned as one of the cases where the power possessed by magical girls could be concretely confirmed.

‘They’re hastening changes to actively incorporate magical girls into the social system.’

Unlike the original work where unbloomed magical girls were consumptively used according to the already established social system, now that they had confirmed the potential of magical girls, they were showing a certain level of respect.

“How long are you going to keep staring at the newspaper, Leader!”

“Even if we’re moving, it’s just to the next room, and besides, we don’t have much to move except for phones, chargers, and clothes.”

“Ah! That’s too much! Moving is originally one of the big events in a family, a sacred act performed on an auspicious day!”

“When there are more than three Chinese characters in Kyoko’s sentence, it’s certainly a rare occurrence.”

“Leader! That’s discrimination against Kyoko! Even if Kyoko usually speaks carelessly!”

“…The boss’s words hurt more.”

The owner allowed Ichika and Kyoko to move in.

When we wrote ‘Two females hope to live on 3rd floor’ on the rent envelope, which was the owner’s only communication channel, the next day, the key to the next room was placed in front of the door.

“Heh! I’m now a proper house owner too.”

“That’s right! We now have our own territory!”

“…It’s just a rental. Besides, since we don’t have much stuff, the move is already done, but do you want to go look at some furniture?”

“Hmm~ Well? I don’t need anything right away, but I’d like to get a kotatsu around winter this year.”

“That’s right! Sitting around a kotatsu and having a hot pot party together has been one of my long-time dreams!”

“I want to invite Sato, Busujima, and all the others who are elsewhere, and have a lively gathering.”

“…Yeah, that would be nice.”

Kyoko, who had been chattering about the kotatsu hot pot party to be held in winter for a while, seemed to hesitate for a moment.

“Um, I… would like to have something like a dressing table.”

“Huh?”

“Eh?”

“Ah, well, it doesn’t have to be an expensive one, but I thought it would be nice to have one… hehe.”

“You only ever go to Leader’s cafe or loading and unloading part-time jobs, do you really need one?”

“That’s too much!”

I didn’t particularly do makeup either, but I thought Ichika’s words might sound insensitive to a girl in her prime.

‘Come to think of it, Ichika is also a girl in her prime, how can she be so rough?’

I comforted Kyoko, who seemed slightly intimidated by Ichika’s words, by taking her side.

“Oh really? Then let’s go to a furniture store together and buy one. If we want, we can buy other necessary things on the way too.”

“L-Leader…!”

“Heh, let’s go out and look around at least.”

“Boss…!”

We grabbed our phones and wallets and went out as soon as our action plan was decided.

The streets of Tokyo, where the full-fledged heat wave had begun, were filled with hot sunlight.

We walked through it, searching for shade.

“Ugh, it’s hot even inside, but it feels even hotter when we come out.”

“Spending time in the air conditioning at Leader’s cafe is the best.”

“At this rate, we should probably get a fan on the way back.”

Ding dong

Ding dong

Ding dong

As we waited for the pedestrian signal and could no longer hide in the shade, we closed our mouths and just walked quietly.

“Oh, but Leader.”

“Yeah?”

“Aren’t you hot? Seeing you with your jacket zipper up all this time, it makes me feel even hotter just looking at you.”

“Are you trying to lose weight or something?”

“Ah.”

I slightly lowered the zipper of my tracksuit to show the state of the T-shirt I was wearing inside.

As I lowered the zipper, two hills that had been tightly contained burst out, freed from compression.

The marks where sweat had pooled under my chest were clear, and the T-shirt wet with sweat clung to my skin, blatantly showing the shape of my chest.

It was an extremely embarrassing sight as the shadows emphasized the upper body curves created by my thin waist.

“…”

“…”

“This always happens in summer, so I just keep everything zipped up. It gets wet with sweat anyway.”

Both Ichika and Kyoko were wearing blue shorts and sleeveless tops, so I secretly wished I could dress lightly like that too, but I wore an extra layer to avoid embarrassing situations.

After hearing my words, they both quietly looked at their own tops and fiddled with them.

“…”

“…”

“What’s wrong? Let’s go.”

“…Okay.”

“…Yes.”

After walking in silence for a while, we arrived at a large furniture store nearby.

Inside, the latest pop songs (2011) were playing, and the cool air conditioning breeze pleasantly dried our sweat.

“So what should we buy first?”

“Since the dressing table is the main thing, let’s go look at dressing tables first.”

“Ah! Thank you, Leader!”

I strode up the escalator in the center of the store, following the path of clean white floors. And just as I was about to head up to the third floor.

“Wow, Leader seems more impatient than she looks.”

“Is it because your mother is Russian?”

Far behind me, Ichika and Kyoko were standing in a single file on the left side of the escalator, coming up obediently.

Oops

My kimchi soup soul just…

“…I was just excited to go shopping after a long time.”

“It doesn’t feel real even when you say it with such a haughty face, I say.”

“Leader often keeps her eyes closed, so it’s hard to tell what she’s thinking.”

“…They’re just narrow.”

Anyway, on the 5th floor we reached, there were mainly women’s wardrobes, dressing tables, and decorative antique furniture. After looking around here and there for a while, Kyoko said:

“Hmm… it seems more expensive than I thought.”

As we actually compared with the real items, signs of going over budget were apparent, and Kyoko, who had been excited opening this and that, started muttering in an uncertain voice.

“Is that so? I think it would be fine if we do some intense loading and unloading for about a week?”

“That’s also our living expenses… haah…”

Kyoko quietly put back the dressing tables she had been looking at and opening, not knowing what to do out of guilt.

“I’ll chip in too.”

“Eh, Leader?!”

“Yeah! It’s no big deal, we can just do a few more loading and unloading shifts, so let’s just buy it.”

As Ichika and I added confidence, Kyoko seemed touched and squirmed happily.

“Leader… Boss…!”

Kyoko hesitantly walked towards the very first dressing table she had

approached as if enchanted when we arrived, and stroked it.

It was an item with storage spaces on both sides of the dressing table that could be used like a wardrobe with simple assembly.

“Thank you so much, hehe.”

“It’s nothing, I’ll use it occasionally too, so think of it as an investment.”

That’s a lie.

I have no plans to do makeup in the future either.

“Heh, good for you, Kyoko.”

Ichika approached with a grin, and the three of us called a clerk and purchased that dressing table.

After paying, the employee asked us to wait for a moment and then brought a large cardboard box containing the product through the warehouse connected to the first floor.

“Wow, this is going to be tough.”

“Hii…”

After finishing the cushion packaging, a cardboard box of such enormous volume came out that the three of us could have used it as a raft if we got on top. Kyoko bowed her head again as if apologizing for causing trouble.

There’s no need to apologize, as I had already thought of ways to bring bulky items.

“Let’s leave this here for now and go buy the rest of the things.”

“Oh, are you going to request a delivery service?”

“Ugh, I feel too sorry to do any more! I’ll move them one by one…”

“It’s okay, Kyoko.”

After persuading Kyoko, who was stamping her feet, we bought the cheapest fan, tissues, a folding table, cushions, etc. from nearby stores.

“Oh, come to think of it, I forgot we need to buy ramen!”

“Ah, ramen is important.”

Since I already had an electric kettle and rice cooker that I had received from the Master who used them at the shop, finally we stopped by a grocery store to buy some food.

After buying everything we needed to buy, we came back to the furniture store from earlier, and when we gathered everything, the luggage had increased to a level where we really needed to call a small truck.

“Should we call a delivery vehicle, Leader?”

“No, but is everything securely packed in cardboard boxes?”

“We even bought separate cushioning material and wrapped it all up, I say.”

“Okay, then will Ichika and Kyoko both stick close to the luggage while protecting yourselves with psychic power?”

“Eh.”

“Oh, no way.”

Over the past month, I had gotten a sense of how to adjust psychic output with Ichika to avoid injuring people. And I decided to take on the challenge of moving people-plus-luggage for the first time, using the know-how I had gained from transporting goods for the past 2 years in preparation for the apocalypse.

I covered the mountain of luggage, Ichika, and Kyoko with an illusion curtain and slowly levitated them using psychic power.

“Ughh… th-this feels really weird.”

“Wow, wait, this is really pulling on my stomach! I think I might pee!”

“Hikari Express departing.”

“W-Wait a minute, Leader, wait a minute?!”

Whoosh

Uwaaaah!

It was very difficult to adjust the distance while levitating due to Ichika’s screams.

I didn’t know she would be so scared, considering she used to jump fearlessly under high-rise buildings.

* * *

“Why are you really exaggerating so much?”

“Did that look like exaggeration to you?!”

We safely arrived at the apartment and unpacked, and while cooking the ramen we had bought earlier, we were talking about housewarming plans.

“It would be difficult to invite the kids who went to Hokkaido or those at welfare centers in other regions, but I want to see the people living nearby again.”

Among the girls who were captured as test subjects together, those who entered the home handicraft factory in Saitama Prefecture would be like living in Gyeonggi-do if compared to Korea, so it would be reasonable to invite them using the move as an excuse.

“Ahaha, now that the time they’ve worked at the factory is longer than the time they were captured, they’ll be surprised when they see us, I say!”

While we were talking excitedly while eating ramen, we heard the sound of the radio we had left on.

[The government has formed a special task force for the supernatural ability group commonly known as magical girls…]

[A popularity ranking vote event for magical girls on a certain site is causing a buzz…]

[The number of foreign governments paying attention to the actions of the Magical Girl Relief Corps is increasing…]

“Come to think of it, the magical girl of [Beginning] seems to have been forgotten already.”

“Huh?”

“Yes?”

“It’s probably difficult for such a suddenly appearing mysterious person to stay in the spotlight, right? But I’m glad that everyone seems to be following [Beginning]’s words well and acknowledging the power and existence of magical girls as they are.”

“Uh…”

“Hmm…”

“Fufu, even if it’s a bit disappointing, the goal was to help magical girls be naturally accepted as members of society.”

“L-Leader…”

“Let’s work hard to prevent incidents like the Kabukicho incident from happening in the future.”

Ichika and Kyoko cautiously opened their mouths with bewildered looks.

“Leader doesn’t use the internet much, I guess?”

“Well… I don’t have a computer at home, and I don’t use a smartphone. But I do listen to the radio and read newspapers every day?”

“I thought it was strange that the attention-seeking Leader didn’t say much after seeing that.”

In the community site screen on the smartphone Ichika showed me, there was madness.

Chapter 25 : The Big Moving Operation

117 : Anonymous 2011/07/25

I want to touch [Beginning]-chan's breasts /(´・ω・`)/

118 : Anonymous 2011/07/25

Those breasts are really cheating, cheating ＜(`・ω・´)＞

119 : Anonymous 2011/07/25

Watching the video of [Beginning]-chan's breast movement for the 180th time www

120 : Anonymous 2011/07/25

119＜＜＜Won't acknowledge less than 300 times ww

121 : Anonymous 2011/07/25

120＜＜＜＜Won't acknowledge less than 400 times ww

122 : Anonymous 2011/07/25

121＜＜＜＜＜Won't acknowledge less than 500 times www

123 : Anonymous 2011/07/25

Won't acknowledge anyone above me wwww

124 : Anonymous 2011/07/25

(´・ω・`) ＜(I'm Beginning-chan's puppy.)

* * *

334 : Anonymous 2011/07/25

My inner thoughts at the start of the broadcast: Wow breasts

My inner thoughts at the end of the broadcast: Wow breasts

335 : Anonymous 2011/07/25

(´⊙ω⊙`) Looking at the ages of confirmed magical girls so far, Beginning-chan must be 17 or under, completely high school level.

336 : Anonymous 2011/07/25

335＜＜＜Thinking about the possibility of being even younger… ugh… this is bad! My underwear ripped!

337 : Anonymous 2011/07/25

Why is everyone only talking about breasts www There are many cute points like her flowing silver hair, voice, saint-like personality, etc. ww

338 : Anonymous 2011/07/25

“Because there are mountains there.”

339 : Anonymous 2011/07/25

Everest-class www

340 : Anonymous 2011/07/25

There are many crazy people who edit Beginning-chan’s voice to make videos, but

341 : Anonymous 2011/07/25

The Editing☆Demon King’s new creation of suki♡suki♡oni-chan made with Beginning-chan’s voice is out!!

342 : Anonymous 2011/07/25

Going on a date today listening to Beginning-chan's song (wink)

343 : Anonymous 2011/07/25

＋Going to mass listening to the Guru's song＋

344 : Anonymous 2011/07/25

Should I go pick flowers while listening to Beginning-chan's song (laugh)

345 : Anonymous 2011/07/25

Everyone, where are you going holding your pants www

* * *

(A masked figure wearing a horse mask stands in the center of the screen.)

"Hello."

"I will get straight to the point: I want to recreate Beginning-chan's breasts."

"But there's a challenge from the start."

"Beginning-chan's body profile doesn't exist anywhere."

(A photo of Shizuku)

"So I want to compare using Shizuku-san, who is currently actively working as an amateur baker."

(A captured photo of Shizuku and [Beginning] standing side by side)

"From Shizuku-san's published height, we can estimate that Beginning-chan is about 160cm tall."

(Creates a 160cm female model using a body proportion calculation program)

"From here on, it's a time of patience."

(Adjusts approximate values for foot size, hand size, neck circumference, shoulder width, body fat percentage, muscle mass to create the most similar silhouette)

“This took 6 hours so far.”

(Compares with broadcast capture photos to find the breast size with the most similar shading)

“Now that we know the size, we’ll start making a silicone model with advice from a professional women’s underwear designer.”

* * *

Mr. A from Hokkaido: Wherever I go on Witch Talk, it’s all about [Beginning] (laugh)

Miss C from Saga: Well, with Kabukicho and all, her solo performance level is different ww

Mr. A from Hokkaido: Just looking at what appeared on the broadcast, everyone seems to avoid mentioning it, so I thought ‘Eh… am I the only fan?’ (laugh)

Mr. H from Kumamoto: It’s probably because it seems to be in opposition to Fujimoto, so people are being cautious

Miss C from Saga: Honestly, even when I saw that broadcast, I was surprised at how indifferent I felt, thinking ‘Ah, Fujimoto is being Fujimoto again.’

Mr. H from Kumamoto: Since the Meiji era, everyone’s been scared and just can’t say it, but they all know ww

Mr. A from Hokkaido: I was surprised that Fujimoto unexpectedly let it slide smoothly.

Mr. H from Kumamoto: Yeah, I thought they would issue a public wanted notice, if only for face.

Mr. A from Hokkaido: I hope Beginning-chan stays around and keeps active for a long time. The things she says are beautiful ww

Miss C from Saga: Kind and with an amazing style, she's a complete angel ww

* * *

It was dizzying.

There were even posts mocking me by comparing my bust shots with those of girls like the magical girl of [Baking] or the magical girl of [Nursing] who frequently appeared on broadcasts.

'Is, is this okay to do? Shizuku or Himari would be hurt if they saw this.'

There were also suspiciously exaggerated fan arts of buttocks or breasts, cosplays (with fake breasts attached), 'I tried dyeing my hair similar silver,' and so on.

"How many different ways are they playing with me? It's surprising that most of the keywords are about breasts."

"Leader has been all of Japan's content since her first appearance, you just didn't know it."

"It's amazing that you're only finding out now."

Ichika and Kyoko were lying on the floor, grinning as they showed me videos and posts related to me.

'Is it because of the impression of being the first bloomed magical girl?'

In the original work, the first bloomed magical girl was Sumire, the magical girl of [Protection].

However, in the original work, her image was bad because she showed a harsh side in the war that took place from December 2011, when the first blooming appeared, until the magical girl of [War] appeared in 2012.

'Knowing only her father's ways, she struggled with her father's ghost on her back and died miserably to [War].'

In contrast, the interest the public is showing me now is close to a kind of affection.

It's not a magical girl forcibly commercialized by companies, but a liking felt from seeing actions as they are.

"This is…"

Having never received this kind of attention from an unspecified majority before, I felt a bit dazed and embarrassed.

"Look at that, as soon as you found out, you're enjoying the attention."

"I've been thinking this for a while, but while pretending not to want to stand out, you really love getting attention."

"Shut up, it's natural for people to like receiving attention."

"Wow, that's exactly the logic of an attention seeker."

"Shut up! So what are we going to do about the housewarming party?"

"Look at you forcibly changing the subject! It's funny."

Slap!

"Ugh?!"

"Answer quickly before I hit you again!"

I slapped Kyoko's thigh hard as she was lying down using her phone, and urged Ichika.

"I looked it up, and we need to file a moving-in notification, check the room condition, and do various things before having the party."

"Didn't the orphanage say they sent all the necessary documents?"

"Haah, they were faster than when giving allowances, so relieved to have one less mouth to feed."

“It was the same for me! I’m disappointed! They checked documents when giving allowances!”

“Heh, I always said I was buying snacks and got fake receipts from the old man at the candy store.”

Given the circumstances of orphanages where purely donation-based spots are insufficient, Ichika and Kyoko, being over 16 and having secured a residence, seemed to be among those they wanted to leave even without an incident.

‘The weed-like vitality of these kids is something else.’

Even I, who had done all sorts of part-time jobs in my previous life, couldn’t have maintained such a stable lifestyle pattern as now without the help of Master and the Sato couple when I first came to this world.

“Oh right, they said to check inside the closet and floor after moving in.”

“It’s because of the tatami and mold, I brought the sprays earlier, let’s spray them now.”

Hiss

Hiss

Since it was an old apartment, residents of Planet B were inevitably often spotted, so we sprayed pest control spray thoroughly in every corner of the room. Surprisingly, there weren’t many areas with mold or torn tatami.

‘Strange, I’ve never seen a caretaker in this apartment.’

Pushing aside the uneasiness, we sprayed disinfectant on a dry cloth and scrubbed hard, and before we knew it, it was completely night. Despite the room still smelling of chemicals, Ichika and Kyoko said they would sleep in their room.

The next day, Ichika and Kyoko said they would go to the ward office to file a moving-in notification.

While Ichika and Kyoko were out, I contacted the people to invite to the housewarming party.

“Heheh, I want to go too, but I’m sorry that my probation period isn’t over yet.”

Haruko, being a minor subject to juvenile law and considering the current social meaning of a magical girl’s star, received a suspension of prosecution in court, with the decisive sentencing reason being that it was violence committed for self-protection purposes.

“Wow! I’ll go! Hikari-chan! Thanks for inviting me!”

Hana accepted refreshingly as soon as I stated my business.

“It’s been a while, Shirogane-san! I heard everything from Ichika-chan and Kyoko-chan!”

The four magical girls working as apprentices at the home handicraft factory in Saitama Prefecture accepted readily, as if they already knew.

‘It’s going to be bustling again after a long time.’

Although only a month had passed since the days when 13 girls lived together preparing for the debutante, I felt a rush of nostalgia.

‘It was something planned targeting Fujimoto, but the real cause was in this society.’

Japanese companies in this world were just not taking the lead because they were wary of Fujimoto, but if the fundamental perception of magical girls hadn’t changed, a second research facility could have appeared at any time.

“We’re back!”

“We’re back, I say!”

“Everyone except Busujima-san said they can attend.”

“Ah～ As expected, getting out right after the trial was too much, I

say.”

“Heh~ I’ll have to feed that cheeky Sato kid the orphanage’s special dark hot pot!”

“What are you trying to feed Hana-chan!”

“Leader, you’re subtly favoring Sato, I say.”

“That’s because you two keep trying to play tricks!”

We exchanged silly banter while organizing the list of things needed for the housewarming party in a few days.

Chapter 26 : The Big Moving Operation

“Hikari-chan! I’m looking forward to Ichika’s housewarming party today!”

“Yeah, Ichika and Kyoko will be happy you’re coming, Hana-chan.”

“What? Those leeches actually got their own place?”

The Master, who had been wiping shelves behind me, seemed very surprised to hear this news.

He had been clicking his tongue at the sight of Ichika and Kyoko hanging around the cafe all through July’s off-season, but it seemed he had been calling them leeches in his mind.

“They’re in the room next to mine in my apartment.”

“Oh, you mean that dreadfully bleak apartment.”

The Master, with his surprisingly refined tastes, seemed unable to understand our apartment’s utilitarian aesthetics and philosophy.

“The location is great, right in Shibuya.”

“Bah, what’s so good about that neighborhood crawling with Yankees and loose women.”

“In other neighborhoods, people stare because I look foreign, but in Shibuya, where many real foreigners live, they don’t stare as much.”

“You should have looks that draw some attention, you know.”

“That’s right, Hikari-chan looks like a princess from a movie!”

I was reminded of the posts from that community site Ichika had shown me before.

They didn't seem to know my appearance due to the perception-blocking mask I had made with my unique weapon, but they mainly mentioned clearly noticeable physical features (breasts, silver hair).

'I guess I didn't pay attention because there are many real foreigners who look similar.'

While thinking this, I gently patted Hana's head, and Hana, seeming pleased, jumped right into my arms.

"What are you doing in the middle of work?"

"Exchanging friendship between friends."

"I'm asking why you're doing that during set work hours."

"Blehhh~ Mean old man!"

Hana poked her head out from my arms and stuck out her tongue.

"Hana-chan, you should say 'mean mister' instead of 'mean old man' to make him happy."

"But if he's an old man, isn't it weird not to call him an old man?"

"Being called an old man makes him feel isolated and lonely, but being called mister makes him feel like he's still part of society, so he feels reassured."

"I see! Hikari-chan is so kind! Blehhh~ mean mister!"

After answering brightly, Hana raised her head again and stuck out her tongue. Seeing this, the Master shook his head as if dumbfounded and left.

"Did he get upset?"

"Cigarette."

"I hate the nasty smell of cigarettes, whether it's Dad or the mean

mister!”

Hearing those words made me feel a bit stung.

I was actually a smoker in my past life, and I wondered how Hana would have seen me if I had smoked here too.

At least she probably wouldn’t have acted as cute as a niece like this.

“That’s right, cigarette smoke is nasty.”

“Right? Hikari-chan and I really get along～”

My mother used to tell me to cut down on smoking too.

“Hehe Hikari-chan! Let’s go buy some yummy cake later!”

“…Okay, let’s do that Hana-chan.”

Hana smiled and spoke to me as I momentarily froze up.

If it weren’t for this little one, I might have already been taking pills for depression in my room.

Now, let’s go buy cake with Hana. I’m looking forward to the taste of the delivery sushi Ichika boasted about.

* * *

“Ichika-chan～ It’s been a while～”

“Leader, good to see you!”

“Momoe! Yuzuki! Welcome, everyone!”

Ichika, who had been setting plates with me in the room, rushed out barefoot down the stairs as soon as she heard the girls arriving and hugged all four of them.

“Have you been well?”

“Yeah, the boss is such a nice person, and we even went to a summer festival with 5 of us, including us!”

“Saitama was seriously hot~”

I followed Ichika out, but not wanting to interfere, I leaned against the railing and watched.

“We caught a turtle in the river and raised it in our dorm! Want to see a picture?”

“Heh~ A turtle? It’s not as big as I thought.”

“Oh, speaking of which, who fed Aka-kun?”

“Didn’t A-chan feed him?”

“Wasn’t it Momo-chan’s turn?”

Two girls who let out a gasp suddenly rushed off, saying they needed to call their boss urgently.

“What, you guys are still forgetful even there!”

“Ahahahaha! That’s right, Momo-chan and A-chan always forgot to pick up the bread!”

The chattering girls finally noticed Ichika was barefoot and laughed at that too.

Ichika gave an embarrassed laugh and went to wash her feet at the faucet while Kyoko brought her slippers.

“Shirogane-san! Hello!”

“Hi.”

“Wow, it’s so nice to see Shirogane-san’s room after so long!”

“Should we all sleep together like back then with 13 of us?”

“Ahaha! We can’t do that anymore!”

“Who’s that behind you?”

The girls noticed Hana hiding behind me and asked.

Hana was shyly peeking out at the girls.

Hana was usually shy except when advising someone.

‘I guess Ichika and Kyoko became familiar because they were at the cafe during business hours all July.’

I gently held Hana’s shoulders.

As warmth touched her shoulders, Hana’s shoulders had risen with tension gradually lowered.

“This is my friend Sato Hana-chan. I met her at my workplace, and she came to visit.”

“Oh, hello, Sato-chan～”

“Sato-chan, are you perhaps…?”

“That’s right, she’s a magical girl.”

“Wow! Everyone here is a magical girl!”

Hana seemed to have gotten a bit more comfortable and hesitantly bowed her head to greet them.

“N-Nice to meet you. I’m Sato Hana.”

“Kyaa! So cute!”

“How old are you, Sato-chan?”

“What grade are you in?”

Hana, who had been taking a break from school, seemed to freeze up at that question.

I hugged the flustered Hana and said:

“Hana-chan is ‘like us,’ taking a break from school for circumstances.”

“Ah…”

“I see…”

The atmosphere became subdued for a moment, making Hana feel even more apologetic as she clutched my clothes, not knowing what to do.

“Hana-chan.”

“Yes, Hikari-chan.”

“Those girls are friends I met after you.”

“Okay.”

“They’re acting like that because they want to befriend you.”

“Okay.”

“We’re friends, right?”

“Yes.”

“Then there are only friends here, right?”

“Yes.”

Hana finally relaxed and looked at the girls properly.

The girls smiled kindly, feeling a sense of kinship as fellow magical girls.

Hana smiled brightly back at their smiles.

“Hehe.”

“Sato-chan! We brought felt dolls from the factory, want to take a look?”

“We were wondering what to do since Ichika-chan doesn’t really like these things, but it’s great that Sato-chan is here!”

“Dolls… dolls! I want to see!”

I told Hana, who was laughing with the two girls carrying large bags, to go to my room and play slowly.

“Ugh, Leader really does favor Sato the most.”

“Shut up.”

I answered casually to Kyoko’s words as she suddenly approached. She finished setting the plates with Ichika, who had finished washing up.

The delivery arrived around the time I was taking drinks out of the fridge and pouring them into paper cups.

“Oh, this is more amazing than I expected.”

“Heh, I worked 3 part-time shifts for a while because of this.”

It was quite an impressive delivery sushi.

The colorful ingredients created an appetizing appearance, and the glossy sheen emanating from the thickly sliced sashimi was unlike that of evening discount sushi sold at department stores or supermarkets.

“Thank you, Ichika-chan～”

“I’ll eat well, boss!”

“Congratulations on moving, boss!”

“Congratulations on moving, Kyoko-chan too!”

We started eating the sushi frantically, starting with giving a word of congratulations each time we received a drink cup or chopsticks.

“Uuu Hikari-chan, I can’t eat wasabi.”

“Okay Hana-chan, I set yours aside separately here.”

“Thank you Hikari-chan!”

I removed the wasabi from one of each type of sushi and organized

them for Hana, who can't handle wasabi well. I then fed a piece of sushi to Hana, who opened her mouth wide.

"Mm! Delicious!"

"I'm glad, Hana-chan."

Seeing that, Kyoko whispered to the girls:

"No matter how you look at it, that's not friends but parent and child."

"I can hear you, you know."

Zap

I appeared behind Kyoko with Blink, lifted up her t-shirt, gave her back a slap, and returned to Hana's side.

"Eep?!"

"Ahahahaha!"

"Pfft, does Kyoko-chan always get hit like this?"

"She can't lift a finger against Shirogane-san! Hahaha!"

The laughter deepened, and after we finished eating all the sushi, we shared cake and talked as the night grew late. The girls all said they would sleep over in Ichika's room.

"Mom! It's super fun here!"

[I'm glad~ Hana-chan, don't forget to brush your teeth before bed, okay?]

"Sato-san, I'll go to the cafe together with Hana-chan tomorrow morning."

[Hoho, thank you, Shirogane-san!]

The day wrapped up with a video call from Mrs. Sato, who seemed to have enjoyed some good couple time while Hana was out visiting, as

her voice had a hint of alcohol.

“Hikari-chan.”

“Yes?”

While the girls’ chatter could be heard from next door, Hana, who had changed into pajamas in my room, quietly called me.

“This is my first time sleeping over at a friend’s house.”

“Really? I wish it could have been a nicer place.”

I feel a bit sorry as an adult that this bleak studio apartment will be the memory of her first pajama party. But Hana shook her head.

“No. I like it because it’s Hikari-chan’s house.”

“I see. I’m glad.”

“Yes, I’m glad.”

We gradually drifted off to sleep, using the laughter from next door as our lullaby.

* * *

[The Magical Girl Alliance functions as a central organization commanding existing small-scale officially recognized magical girl groups…]

[It essentially functions as a second government, separately handling legislation, administration, and judiciary for magical girls…]

[Representatives of each company and institution exercise equal rights as magical girls…]

[The interim representative of the Alliance is Fujimoto Sumire, who is the representative of National Magical Girls and the representative of the Fujimoto Group.]

“We pledge to exercise great responsibility in using supernatural abilities.”

“We will faithfully fulfill our duties as protectors of the nation, society, and, more broadly, the Japanese people.”

“And we wish to appoint the magical girl of [Beginning], who opened the era of magical girls and personally carried out public duties as a supernatural ability user…”

“…As the chairperson of the Magical Girl Alliance council.”

Chapter 27 : The Third Light

[Under the third light, I, the magical girl of [War], declare.]

[To those who live on the land where the goddess's remains fell.]

[You insects who fight even while pulling infinity down to the finite.]

[Kill and fight eternally under the fate of eternal struggle and destruction.]

[Filthy desires and ugly feelings of conquest will become the virtues of this land.]

* * *

"I… don't quite understand."

"Yes, that's possible too. Sumire."

It was a voice so gentle and kind that anyone who had ever encountered Fujimoto Eiji or seen his actions would be astounded. One might say he was a madman speaking with blood on both hands in a warm whisper that he would only give to a young daughter asking why the sky is blue.

"I find it difficult to guess your intention, Father, as to why you want to nominate the magical girl of [Beginning] as the representative of all supernatural ability users."

Could there be some meaning she didn't know?

Sumire hesitated for a moment before carefully continuing her words.

"Unlike the Prime Minister or the Prosecutor General who move through power, that person alone possesses an unassailable strength."

Could that person be someone who could be placed under Fujimoto's shadow?

Eiji didn't dismiss his daughter's straightforward advice but just smiled faintly, silently urging her to say more as if to tell her to continue.

"I find it hard to guess your intention to bring close again the person you had already sent assassins after."

"That person cannot kill me."

Sumire was shocked by those words and flinched with her clasped hands but soon regained her composure.

Eiji did not scold his daughter for her momentary lapse, which belonged to the category of 'naive' rather than 'broken'.

"Because that person is bound by benevolence and righteousness, bound by justification."

"Justification… you say."

"Sumire, isn't it strange?"

This time Sumire quietly bowed her head, expressing an apology for not being able to give the answer her father wanted.

"Why did the one who first shared this power act so ambiguously, as if waiting for ignorance to make a mistake?"

"…"

"Why did a prophet appear to show the way when a blind man acted as if trying to check his path by throwing his own coin?"

"…"

"The one who shared this power seems to be waiting for mistakes, and [Beginning] seems to be opposing so that those mistakes don't happen."

When a new era comes, mistakes are always made in the process of pioneering an unprecedented path. That was the correct form of history flowing and the history of human development.

Mistakes are improved and developed.

History advanced through a path of blood.

“But what if what comes after that mistake is irreversible?”

“Are you saying [Beginning] appeared with that as justification?”

Eiji picked up his teacup and drank the tea.

It was the finest tea, bitter but with a deep aroma.

Properly appreciating the aroma of tea is also learned by drinking one properly brewed cup after hundreds of failures.

“If Fujimoto were not needed in the new era, that person would have appeared mysteriously and cut off my head with supernatural abilities.”

“…”

Tak

As he put down the teacup, Eiji’s eyes flashed.

“Supernatural abilities, magical girls, the red broadcast… There was a right path to follow in all these flows, and something becomes distorted if the old order is destroyed.”

“And.”

“That is the justification that person absolutely cannot give up.”

An era where the existing order is shaken but unable to believe in the new order.

“Keep that person close and bind them with justification, make them lose their benevolence if they refuse, and if they accept, bind them to the old order.”

In such an era of chaos, Fujimoto developed while gaining everything.

“Both evil deeds and good deeds, everything must be done under a single person, the master of Fujimoto. As long as the name Fujimoto remains, even mistakes become history.”

Eiji muttered while savoring the bitterness of the tea.

“That’s why I killed my brother who tried to divide Fujimoto and drove my father to the back room.”

“…”

The pain hidden deep in Sumire’s heart throbbed as it revived.

[Daughter of a murderer! I’ll kill you all! Die!!]

The scream of her cousin’s sister, who resented her.

The last moments of Branch Director Takahashi.

Kaede, whose entire body was crushed.

All these scenes flashed by, making Sumire’s chest throb.

Is this really right?

Is Fujimoto’s way something that cannot be changed, something absolute?

‘Both evil deeds and good deeds and mistakes, everything under the name of Fujimoto…’

[The power of dreams held by the stars is something you cannot possess…]

‘If that is something that cannot be possessed in the name of Fujimoto, what should I do?’

The girl who had learned only Fujimoto’s ways while watching her father all her life was a little afraid of that.

‘Perhaps if it were her…’

* * *

‘Fujimoto Eiji, that bastard.’

This damp, old-man-breath-smelling ploy was 100% Fujimoto Eiji’s doing. The Sumire described in the story was more of a soldier type than a politician.

‘Sumire stubbornly kept talking about her father until just before she was killed by [War] in the latter half of volume 1, leading people in place of her dead father.’

To control ordinary people in chaos, she grinds magical girls to bloom them and tramples on <FLAG>.

A supporting character who repeats only this simple principle of action and dies miserably to a 3-star magical girl.

‘Probably this time, too; she just stubbornly said what her father told her to say.’

A girl who has the desire to protect but doesn’t know how to protect.

Fujimoto Eiji’s move that Sumire pulled out instead was painful in its own way.

I was leaning against the apartment railing, shaking my legs to calm down due to anxiety.

To think these guys would pull a drowning man’s tactic.

‘If I accept, [Beginning]’s reputation becomes a pretty ornament for the alliance, and if I refuse, they’ll execute a legitimacy recovery centered on Sumire.’

[Beginning] is loved because she holds a cause for everyone.

If [Beginning] doesn’t sit on the prepared throne following what she herself said, that moral perfection is damaged.

‘What, so the magical girl of [Beginning] was just talk after all?’

This is the kind of thing I’ll hear.

While watching the alliance manipulate magical girls to suit companies’ tastes.

Saying what’s wrong with overworking a few magical girls from research facilities.

Completely forgetting about drug experiments that never even happened.

‘Should I just disappear somewhere like this?’

My heart was already aching that the camps I had prepared hard for over the past 2 years seemed to be becoming useless.

After experiencing Fujimoto’s drowning man tactic, even becoming a hermit didn’t seem so bad.

‘What nonsense.’

Even after removing adults’ greed toward magical girls, revealing their true power, and stopping magical girls who rose up with resentment towards society, the malice of this world stuck persistently.

‘Should I have ripped off Fujimoto Eiji’s head?’

Then a second and third villain would have appeared.

‘Should I have pretended not to see Haruko?’

Then there would have been more victims.

‘Should I not have saved Ichika in time?’

Then those kids who laughed and chatted together would have become invalids.

‘Should I have waited until the magical girl of [War] appeared?’

While watching Master and the Sato couple die.

“Haah…”

I couldn’t find an answer.

Actually, there was an answer, but I didn’t want to choose it.

If I choose that, it really can’t be undone.

“Why are you sighing so much in the middle of the night?”

Ichika, who had woken up, trudged down the apartment corridor where I had been pacing.

After all, we had listened to the evening news together in shock and concluded that no matter how much we thought about it, there was no answer, so we went to sleep.

“Just my mind is complicated.”

“That’s your problem, Leader, you always overthink.”

Shook shook

Ichika threw a few punches in the air and winked.

“That’s why you get beaten up by security guard nobodies before you can say ‘uh’.”

“That was ages ago.”

“It was just two months ago?”

“I won, you know!”

“With your specs, taking that long means you lost.”

Ichika’s calm assessment hurt my pride, but it wasn’t wrong, so I could only mumble excuses.

“I wasn’t used to fighting then.”

“Are you saying you’re used to it now?”

“That’s right.”

“Then what are you afraid of?”

“…”

Sometimes Ichika hits the nail on the head like this.

“Don’t think, Feel!”

“That’s a movie line.”

Ichika rubbed her nose with a look that said, ‘That’s right!’ and winked.

Even her usual speech smelled of rough dobok, and it seemed her movie taste was in that direction too.

Poof poof

Watching Ichika make ridiculous gestures and even imitate Drunken Fist made me laugh involuntarily.

“I was wondering what you were always looking at on your phone, turns out you were watching movies that came out before you were born.”

“Want to watch together, Leader? It’s fun!”

“Haha… I’ll pass.”

Exchanging silly words like this, I felt my head gradually clearing up.

“Ichika.”

“Yeah?”

“Do I look stupid to you?”

“Yeah, why do you still insist on living with newspapers and using an outdated phone?”

“…I mean, acting like I know something and causing trouble, but getting scared when it actually comes close.”

“Is that so? In the logistics warehouse, in Odaiba, in Kabukicho, you ultimately made the best choices.”

The best choices, huh.

I just struggled, hoping it would turn out better than the original work I knew.

“Ichika.”

“Why are you calling me.”

“If there’s a path that feels right deep down but is too difficult and hard to take… what would you do? …Even if another path leads to where you must go.”

“Yeah, Leader really is stupid.”

Ichika blurted out sharply and spoke with confidence, full of certainty.

“The Leader I know would have already chosen the former a long time ago, and this is the kind of question you’d only ask when whining. Besides, the other path probably isn’t easy either.”

“…”

“I’ll fight with you then.”

Ichika slightly raised her heels and put her arm around my shoulders.

“I’ve got your back.”

“…Thanks.”

At least now I wasn’t alone.

Chapter 28 : The Third Light

The first light of the Glass Star is connected to dreams.

Dreams that girls find and discover.

The second light of the Glass Star is connected to fate.

Fate that leads dreams connected to others.

The third light of the Glass Star is connected to the world.

A world that declares its domain and accepts others.

When the second red broadcast passed and four magical girls declared to the world.

The only domain most magical girls could go to was the domain of [War].

* * *

In a situation where demons descended, and magical girls opposed each other, the four domains established by those with transcendent power were the final consideration and malice of the three evil gods who were the true villains.

[War] left only the strong in its domain.

[Revelation] left only believers in its domain.

[Plague] left only the sick in its domain.

[Death] left only souls in its domain.

That's why [War] suddenly appeared in the land where the strongest, namely magical girls, were gathered and fighting.

‘I had planned to avoid it at all costs because I really didn’t want to encounter it.’

The moment I become hostile to that one described as the strongest, the merit of being a born 3-star becomes as good as gone.

The TV news was buzzing about the era of magical girls that would begin with [Beginning]’s inauguration as chairperson of the alliance council.

‘In the original work, the real era of magical girls begins when they hold the power of life and death over ordinary people.’

Crash

“Ah?!”

“Hm?”

The Master, who was adjusting various types of coffee grinders, looked at me doing the dishes as if nothing was wrong. Then he turned his gaze back to the grinder and blurted out:

“Go home if you’re not feeling well.”

“…It’s not that time of the month.”

“Who said anything about that?”

“When you try to awkwardly change the subject while bringing medicine, asking if I caught a cold or have indigestion, it’s obviously that.”

“You seem to be that too, judging by how you’re nitpicking words.”

The Master chuckled momentarily, then waved his hand, indicating I should take a break.

I sat on the bench under the shade behind the cafe and looked at the scenery of Yokohama Port.

Whoosh

Whoosh

White ships coming and going beyond the blue horizon defined the boundary between sea and sky.

Contrary to my mood, the cloudless seaside was so clear and clean that it made me feel even more gloomy inside.

As I was looking at the clear sky with complicated thoughts, I heard Sato Hana's voice.

"Hikari-chan."

Tiptoeing

Sato Hana approached with quiet steps, her side tail swaying, after checking if the mean mister who usually smoked here was around.

In Hana's mind, the Master seemed to be in an ambiguous position. He would play rude pranks but feel uncomfortable when actually facing her.

You'd think they'd become close after seeing each other for 2 years, coming in and out of the cafe.

"Hana-chan."

"Hehe, were you looking at the seaside? I always do that too when I feel stuffy in my room."

Oomph!

Hana playfully climbed onto my lap.

The high body temperature unique to young children was a bit painful in the August heat, but I didn't show it and hugged Hana tightly.

If I showed even a slight sign of dislike, this kind and sensitive child might get hurt.

"When are you thinking of going to school, Hana-chan?"

“Umm~ about that~ Mom and Dad said I took too long a break from school, so I should start from 5th grade of elementary school based on my age.”

“Are you scared about starting from a higher grade?”

“No! I learned everything up to 6th grade at the hospital!”

“Hana-chan is smart.”

“Ehehe!”

Hana smiled as she looked back at my words and continued:

“So they asked if I’d rather enter middle school and make new friends instead of going to an elementary school where kids are already hanging out together.”

“I see, that makes sense.”

Thinking about it, it might be better for Hana, who took a break from school, to start in the first year of middle school, where everyone is bewildered, rather than squeezing in among kids who have lived together for five years.

“Hana-chan is smart and kind, so you’ll make friends quickly.”

“Hehe, but Hikari-chan is still my first and best friend!”

“Thank you, Hana-chan.”

“But I’m looking forward to going to middle school in 2 years!”

“…”

2 years.

Will this world still be intact by then?

Will I be able to see Hana in a school uniform?

“Hana-chan.”

“Yes?”

“Do you still want to help many people as a magical girl?”

“Yes!”

“I see.”

“I see~”

I hugged Hana tightly again as she repeated my words.

Hana, whether knowing my feelings or not, giggled as she let herself be hugged.

You know.

I want to see it too.

Hana helping people, wearing a school uniform, and going to school with friends.

At that moment, I realized.

“Ah…”

This is my true feelings.

The answer was already decided for me.

I will save this world.

It didn’t require as grand a resolution as I thought.

It started from a tiny wish.

The big choice that might change everything in the future was made during an insignificant conversation on a bench behind the cafe on a hot summer day.

‘Rather, I might not have seen my true feelings in the midst of complicated thoughts.’

I made the final resolution that I hadn't been able to sort out in a corner of my mind since the day I decided to help Haruko until I finished what happened in Kabukicho.

* * *

"Inspector Yamashita! Are you listening!"

"Yes, I'm listening well, so please stop asking, Miss Ishikawa. It's the 21st time."

"Miss?! I'm the proper head of the magical girl countermeasures team of the Metropolitan Police Department, the magical girl of [Order], Ishikawa Tsugumi!"

"Yes, Team Leader, that's the 33rd time you've said that."

Hmph hmph

The girl in a magical girl outfit modeled after a detective's jacket and police uniform, with thick eyebrows twitching in enthusiasm, entered the meeting hall while soothing her unenthusiastic subordinate.

Yamashita felt self-loathing at his situation of calling a girl who looked barely old enough for high school 'Team Leader'.

'How did I end up looking after the Superintendent General's granddaughter?'

During the Kabukicho incident, Yamashita had taken time off and was drinking heavily at home.

He was at home looking at housing contract sites, wondering whether it would be more comfortable to be assigned to Sagawa or Gunma, when he got a call from the Superintendent General.

-Yamashita-kun! Is it true that you cooperated with magical girls to save citizens?

-Huh…?

With remnants of an elite police officer left in his mind, Yamashita

quickly turned on his PC to check the news.

An article about what happened in Kabukicho.

There was the image of a nameless hero evacuating citizens.

[Protecting citizens' safety is the natural duty of the police!]

His own image spouting lines that only a hot-blooded policeman with a brain full of muscle would say.

That hot-blooded policeman disappeared into the darkness with the end of the situation, without revealing his name or rank.

A face like his own.

A police officer who didn't reveal his rank.

Whatever the reason, it would be better than the backwaters of Gunma and Saga.

No risk, high return.

'This is an opportunity.'

Yamashita had been a man who hadn't miss opportunities since graduating from Tokyo University's law department.

-Of course, isn't protecting citizens' safety the natural duty of the police! As soon as I heard citizens were in trouble, I rushed out immediately!

-Very good! We needed someone with experience cooperating with magical girls within the Metropolitan Police Department, and this is perfect!

-Hahaha!

-From now on, you'll be the deputy head of the magical girl countermeasures team!

-Hahaha! Thank you!

And now.

“Inspector Yamashita! Where has the spirit you showed when evacuating citizens gone!”

“I’m sorry.”

“Inspector Yamashita! Why is the magical girl security force training progressing so slowly!”

“I’m sorry.”

“Inspector Yamashita! Where did the pudding in the office refrigerator go!”

“It wasn’t me.”

“Are you lying when only Inspector Yamashita and I are in the office because the security force training isn’t finished yet!”

“I’m sorry.”

A makeshift department in the Metropolitan Police Department with only two team members for now.

Yamashita became its only minion. And he came to today’s inauguration ceremony of the Magical Girl Alliance Council as a member of the ‘National Magical Girl Official Organization’.

Murmur murmur

The meeting hall he entered with unenthusiastic steps consisted of a central table where dozens could sit around and gallery seats where hundreds could observe.

All sorts of people were moving around between them, finding and sitting in their seats.

‘It’s just like the National Diet.’

Amidst the many people already seated, famous magical girls who had already appeared on broadcasts or magical girls selected as representatives of companies or official organizations were sitting at the central table.

There were those famous enough to recognize just by face and girls sitting with bewildered looks as if they had been selected from somewhere.

‘What kind of self-governing body is this?’

Behind those girls, adults stood one by one, constantly exchanging opinions via radio or phone.

They occasionally whispered instructions to the girls or confirmed items written in their notebooks one by one.

‘So the magical girls are just puppets, is that it?’

Tsugumi went to her seat at the central table with her name written on it and sat down.

Yamashita stood quietly behind that chair.

Unlike the surrounding adults, he was in a position to be swayed by that girl, which made him feel ridiculous.

[Head of Metropolitan Police Department Magical Girl Countermeasures Team and Security Force Representative]

‘What on earth is this supposed to be?’

To Yamashita, even this inauguration ceremony looked like nothing more than a political game where adults watching through screens each held a paper doll.

Tap

Tap

Tap

When magical girls were seated in all seats except one, Fujimoto Sumire, as interim representative, struck the gavel to signal the start.

Everyone except the ‘secretaries’ standing one by one behind the magical girls went to sit in the gallery seats.

And now.

“We will begin the inauguration ceremony of the Magical Girl Alliance Council and the inauguration of the chairperson.”

Sumire’s eyes did not leave the single empty seat.

Will she come?

Will she sit in that seat as the representative of magical girls?

Will she start a new era together with Fujimoto?

Sumire hoped, just a little, that the righteous girl would remain forever as just a one-night dream.

Because Fujimoto’s ways cannot grasp dreams.

‘Or perhaps she could show a new direction…’

Chapter 29 : The Third Light

“When the training period for 50 additional volunteers ends, we have decided to immediately dispatch 10 teams of 6 people each, including one senior relief corps member, to conflict areas and regions in medical blind spots.”

Himari, the born 2-star magical girl of [Nursing] with impressive golden hair and eyes, calmly continued speaking while turning to the next page of her documents.

“We have created a basic manual for using healing abilities and distributed it to local government facilities and libraries, and have finished negotiations for overseas dispatch personnel to act under the supervision of the Red Cross.”

After reporting all the prepared content, Himari bowed slightly to Sumire, the interim representative, and quietly sat down again.

“Wow, the magical girl of [Nursing] seems to be very good at speaking. Inspector Yamashita!”

“Team Leader, please be quiet during the meeting.”

Even if not to the level of Himari, who acted as the representative of the first officially recognized magical girl organization, the magical girls selected as council members were quite knowledgeable in their respective fields.

Perhaps due to their experience working with experts in the field, the presentation session proceeded in a reasonably proper manner.

‘I expected it to be like a class presentation or flea market.’

Since the atmosphere of high school or middle school that Yamashita had experienced wasn’t like this, he was genuinely surprised by the

meeting atmosphere of these experienced girls.

‘It’s as if all sorts of colored sparkles are flying around the meeting hall.’

When Yamashita glanced at the ceiling of the meeting hall, he saw that intangible energy was overflowing and scattering sparkles every time the girls presented their achievements.

“I’ve heard well. Next, the head of the Metropolitan Police Department’s Magical Girl Countermeasures Team will present.”

“Ah! Hello! I’m Ishikawa Tsugumi of the Magical Girl Countermeasures Team of the Japanese Police Metropolitan Police Department!”

“Do you have anything to present?”

“No! Currently, all 30 members of the Magical Girl Security Force are in training, so we are on standby!”

Our hastily formed organization is just idling.

Yamashita, hearing the kind of presentation that should never be made during an achievement reporting session, barely held back from slapping his forehead and mumbled in his mouth.

‘At times like this, you should talk about future visions and gradually change the subject! Team Leader!!’

“I’ve heard well. Next is…”

“May I present?”

Murmur murmur

When one girl stood up from the ‘full’ central table, everyone in the meeting hall was shocked.

“Huh…!”

“[Beginning]?!”

“When?!”

She was sitting there.

* * *

She was sitting there.

‘Fujimoto Sumire…’

Perhaps we had been entangled much earlier than we thought.

Perhaps from the moment I ate at Master’s shop after coming to this world.

Perhaps from the moment, Hana called me Hikari-chan from her wheelchair.

Perhaps from the moment Ichika and Kyoko patted my back, saying thank you.

Perhaps from the moment I started recalling the connections here as much as thinking about Mother.

While taking one step at a time on a path different from the original work.

I had been covering it with hesitation that rose up just in case.

I will no longer cover what I ‘thought was right’ deep in my heart, which I had been hiding behind a mask of selfishness since two years ago.

“The chairperson candidate is very late.”

“Yes, the road was so complicated that I got lost for a while.”

“…I’m glad you found your way here, even now.”

Fujimoto Sumire looked at me with complicated eyes for a moment and then mouthed:

‘Even now.’

Was it the last warning sent by her before she took on her father's ghost?

Or was it an illusion shown by my selfishness telling me to turn back and run away even now?

"I will…"

"…"

"…not take on the role of chairperson of the Magical Girl Alliance Council."

Murmur murmur

The 'secretaries' standing behind the girls in the meeting hall were all connecting their radios to receive instructions. I could hear the related parties sitting in the gallery talking in urgent voices.

Zing

I could feel the cameraman who had been filming us from the corner of the meeting hall urgently zooming in and focusing.

The world was paying attention to our conversation.

"Then regarding the magical girl of [Beginning]'s future activities in officially recognized magical girl organizations…"

"Instead."

Silence.

Everyone held their breath as the direction of the future era of magical girls would be determined based on how [Beginning], who suddenly appeared, responded.

"I want to become a king."

"…?"

"King?"

“What on earth does that mean, a king…?!”

“Is she asking for the Emperor’s position? But the imperial family’s descendants…?!”

Shh

Sumire extended her hand to silence those who were agitated and looked at me again with calm eyes.

“This is an official place. Please refrain from jokes or statements that could be doubted for their intentions.”

I held up the colorless Glass Star.

Three starlight guided by my heart shone brilliantly.

For the past two years, it had never shone so brilliantly, not even in Odaiba or Kabukicho.

A sparkle allowed only to one who truly deceives the world.

To protect what I thought was ‘right,’ I deceive the predetermined fate of this world.

I deceive ＜Magical Girl HAZARD＞ created by three evil gods who deceive humans.

The era of magical girls will begin with my words as a human, not the declaration of evil gods.

I separated my consciousness and declared to both the world and humanity.

“Under the third light, I, the magical girl of [Beginning], declare.”

[Under the third light, I, the magical girl of [Deception], declare.]

“To those who live on the land where all girls’ dreams began.”

[To those who live on the tragic land destined for destruction.]

“To girls born under the stars that guide others with dreams.”

[To future girls who will hurt each other due to ignorance.]

“Be protected and respected under eternal dreams and fate.”

[Deceive even the future and fate given by the three evil gods.]

“Hope that leads others will become the virtue of this land.”

[Deception that deceives even fate will become the victory of humans.]

At that moment, the world responded to my sincerity.

7381 first lights resonated and entered the star, becoming dreams that form the world.

67-second lights resonated and entered the star, becoming fates that lead the world.

And I shot a single-third light up into this land.

Flash!

The colorless light illuminated in the center of the meeting hall became a pillar and shot up into the sky.

The light that rose beyond the blue sky to the first edge of the dark universe spread widely, embracing the land where magical girls were born.

“Wh-What is that?!”

“It’s all light, nothing but light?!”

“What on earth is happening!”

Chaos.

Shock.

As the light bursting from the center of the meeting hall pierced even the roof, people scattered in panic.

Some were hurriedly trying to escape outside the meeting hall.

Some were just staring with wide eyes, trying to witness the change of the era.

“Ugh, because of the light curtain… I can’t go.”

“M-Miss, it’s dangerous!”

The bodyguards who rushed to protect their VIPs in this abnormal situation could only shout, unable to approach because the light curtain blocked the central table.

Tap!

I tapped my staff to compose the place that would become my domain.

Imagine a paradise for all girls.

A place where dreams grow.

A place where all dreams begin.

“Interfering adults, please exit for a moment.”

Pop!

Pop!

Pop!

All the adults standing behind the girls at the back of the central table were enveloped in dazzling light and exited outside the meeting hall.

I smiled at the girls who were confused or showing tears amid chaos.

“Welcome. To the Garden of Dreams.”

“Gar…den?”

Himari, who had been watching everything with a remarkably calm

expression, was shocked when she looked around.

The drab-colored tables and chairs that had filled the meeting hall where the girls were sitting had all been replaced by glass, emitting a soft rainbow-colored light.

“Huh? Where is this?”

“Trees… trees?!”

At the end of their gaze turned with the fresh breeze were countless trees and flowers.

“In the middle of Tokyo?!”

“Why is there a botanical garden when it was a meeting hall?!”

Garden.

It was a vast garden.

It was a garden so large that even hundreds of girls who had been in the meeting hall’s tables and gallery seats couldn’t fill it all.

Brilliant sunlight shone under the soft rainbow-colored glass cover, and on the beautiful glass tables and chairs where the girls were sitting, a cup of black tea was placed on each.

“What… on earth… is this…?”

Sumire’s eyes were shaking uncontrollably as she struggled to continue speaking in shock.

Because.

The garden was in mid-air.

The garden contained in a huge glass sphere was floating in the sky above Tokyo.

Outside the spherical shield, the sky of Japan, which you would only see on a science channel, was visible.

We have temporarily risen to a space where only the masters of this land can stay, free from the bonds of the land we originally lived on.

“Inspector Yamashita!! There’s something like a curtain over all of Japan!!”

As Tsugumi said, unconsciously looking for an adult who wasn’t present, the entire sky of Japan was covered with a curtain shining like the surface of a prism.

Like an aurora, it spread over the sky of all Japan, which had only been blue, painting it over with colorful paints.

Tap tap

I drew the attention of the girls who were about to faint from shock or looking around frantically with the sound of my staff.

“Everyone.”

“Let’s begin now.”

“A meeting of only magical girls.”

“The Dream of Walpurgis.”

Chapter 30 : The Third Light

“The Dream of… Walpurgis?”

“What is… that…?”

“More importantly, you’re saying we should have a meeting… just among ourselves?”

“Yes, magical girls will decide on magical girl matters.”

Flash!

The first rule was engraved on the girls’ Glass Stars.

[Magical girls will decide on magical girl matters.]

“That is the first rule for magical girls living on my domain.”

“Domain?! Don’t tell me that glass-like… curtain covering all of Japan…?!”

“Yes, it’s my domain.”

I answered the bewildered girls with a confident smile.

With the spirit that Master had taught me sometime.

“…”

“…”

As such, an enormous scale story popped out, and the color drained from the girls’ faces.

Some girls were gulping down the tea in front of them, unable to bear their thirst.

I spoke while instructing the domain to refill the empty teacups.

“I really don’t understand anything you’re saying. Why should magical girls act outside the realm of the constitution?”

“I’m not saying to completely isolate from society.”

I turned my gaze from Himari and met the eyes of each girl looking at me fearfully.

“Let’s decide all matters in Japan that are carried out using magical girl powers… supernatural abilities through meetings in the ‘Garden.'”

“What if someone doesn’t follow what’s decided here?”

“They will lose the sparkle of their star in my domain.”

“Are you saying magical girls who don’t like what you say should leave for other countries?”

The girls listening to the exchange between Himari and me had shocked expressions.

“No, as I said from the beginning.”

I spread both hands towards the magical girls gathered in the center of the garden.

“I appoint all of you magical girls as members of the ‘Dream of Walpurgis’ council.”

“Dream of Walpurgis…”

“You can meet there regularly and decide on magical girl matters.”

“W-We can’t handle such an important task…”

“Magical girl of [Beginning], then what exactly are you deciding?”

Sumire was still pale but was quickly regaining her composure while taking deep breaths.

“I’m just setting the rules for this domain and lending the place.”

“Are you saying the council members can operate a self-governing body as they please?”

“Second rule.”

I answered Sumire’s question by proclaiming a rule instead.

[The right and wrong of meetings are based on one’s own beliefs.]

“You can decide for or against based on your beliefs, not things outside this ‘Garden.’ Because only magical girls can enter here.”

Flash

Hundreds of stars with different colors were engraved on the glass curtain surrounding the garden and rose to the sky.

“Just remember that any magical girl can watch the Dream of Walpurgis in this ‘Central Garden’ as an observer or juror.”

Some girls lowered their heads, perhaps feeling chills at the thought that each of the hundreds of stars engraved in the sky was watching them.

“Let’s prohibit violence in the ‘Central Garden’ as angry magical girls who disagree with the meeting content might barge in.”

“B-But even if we decide here, I wonder if the company people will understand…”

I heard a worried voice from a magical girl who seemed particularly conscious, perhaps chosen from among affiliated company families.

“Third rule.”

[All magical girls can request help from the Garden.]

“Even excluding this Central Garden, the ‘Garden of Dreams’ is connected to infinite dream spaces.”

I felt some of the stars in the sky focusing on my words directly testing the space.

“If you feel threatened or oppressed, please request help from me. However, I can ‘sense’ your mental images here. Please do not test me with lies.”

[Magical girls will decide on magical girl matters.]

[The right and wrong of meetings are based on one’s own beliefs.]

[All magical girls can request help from the Garden.]

“Where is this meeting heading?”

“Hope… because magical girls give dreams and hope.”

Some girls agreed with my words, while others dismissed them as nonsense.

But if they ‘communicate’ through their own beliefs, not as puppets of society, perhaps they could really become the hope of this world.

“I’d like to give a gift to those of you who respect the rules I’ve set.”

Pop!

The letters M.M floated above the three rules engraved on the girls’ Glass Stars.

Magical

Merchandise

“M… M…?”

“What is this now…?”

“It’s a system where you can receive useful gifts containing girls’ dreams with magic recovered by leading others with dreams.”

In my domain, using magic obtained through plunder is prohibited.

When I concentrated a bit of magic on the Glass Star, a small macaron popped out.

Someone took out a teddy bear, someone else a bouquet.

“We will lead fate with dreams and move towards hope.”

I gifted the small macaron to Tsugumi who was standing blankly.

“Magical girls’ dreams don’t always flow in a direction that’s kind to others. I’m counting on you for those times.”

“Ah, y-yes…”

“Then let’s conclude the inauguration ceremony of the Dream of Walpurgis.”

Pop!

Pop!

Light appeared under the girls’ feet, and they started returning to the original meeting hall where they were.

From the next meeting, they’ll probably have to create it themselves.

By now, all the lights engraved on the ceiling had disappeared too.

Only silence filled the garden in the quietly floating glass sphere.

Only one girl remained in front of me.

Fujimoto Sumire.

“…”

She’s the person I should face first if I have to change fate, but I actually don’t know her well.

Even in the original work, she only appears occasionally in volume 1 before dying along with the end of the old era as a minor character.

[What I… wanted to protect… wasn’t… the name…!]

Now that I've decided to save everyone living in this world from the fate of destruction…

'Let's give her one chance.'

"Fujimoto-san."

"Yes."

"This world will be destroyed by great evils next year."

"…What?"

"The reason magical girls appeared, <Magical Girl HAZARD>, and the red broadcast… all of these were born to destroy this world."

Sumire's eyes shook violently when she heard the words I said.

She was breathing heavily, and her hands were trembling.

She's probably confused as to why I'm telling these things to her, a human of Fujimoto.

"The reason I don't bring down Fujimoto, and the reason I showed all of this, is to prevent that."

"Wh-Why are you telling me this?"

"Because your fate as a magical girl is [Protection], not you who mechanically follows the will of Congressman Fujimoto… your father."

I hinted at her fate while tying a blue ribbon on Sumire's finger.

A clue to blooming.

The fate she should follow.

Sumire stared blankly at that blue ribbon.

Her mental image, gradually regaining stability and recalling the meaning of [Protection], was running towards some kind of conviction.

This moment is probably the turning point where her image differs from that in the original work.

“…What should I do?”

“Please lead magical girls towards hope in the Dream of Walpurgis.”

“It won’t be easy. Many will resist.”

“If it’s the magical girl way, not the Fujimoto way, you can definitely do it.”

“…”

Sumire nodded with difficulty while looking at her lavender Glass Star.

“[Protection]…”

Sumire muttered while stroking the blue ribbon tied on her finger.

“It’s… what my little sister… told me.”

For the first time, her consistently sharp expression softened and a faint smile appeared.

“What I couldn’t protect… so now I think I know… what I should protect now.”

Pop

Sumire, who had been muttering for a moment, quietly disappeared, enveloped in light, back to where she was initially.

“…”

Silence.

Now I was the only one left in the Central Garden.

I slowly walked towards the glass wall.

I’ve done it.

Now I must fight a life-or-death battle with [War] to protect this domain.

Although [Revelation], who didn't show much interest in humans, and [Death] and [Plague], who settled in places where humans don't live, are also concerning.

[War] will definitely come here where magical girls are gathered and try to reclaim the domain.

'If I lose, the garden will become a hall of war, and the Dream of Walpurgis will change to a duel ritual.'

In June next year, when that one wakes up according to the cycle set by the evil gods, I had to defeat her no matter what.

'I need companions. Ones who can overwhelmingly defeat [War] and fight against demons…'

I can't look after each 1-star girl growing like sprouts now.

Now that I've isolated Japanese magical girls from Fujimoto's threat, I need to bloom strong ones with trustworthy character who appeared in the original work.

At this point, when it's an unclaimed territory with born 3-stars not awake yet, I had to actively expand the domain and be together with magical girls.

'I also need to recruit foreign magical girls that the protagonist Yuki saw while escaping Japan and heading towards [Death]'s domain at the northern end in the original work.'

Because <Magical Girl HAZARD> was a Japanese light novel, I thought the setting of 70% of magical girls residing in Japan was because of that, but living in this world made me wonder 'Is it really because it's Japan?'

'The line 'the land where the goddess's remains fell' in [War]'s domain declaration also bothers me.'

I'm anxious.

I’m impatient.

It’s uncertain.

There’s too much to prepare.

If it was going to be like this, I should have made up my mind faster.

No

It’s not too late yet.

From now on, I just need to prepare my best.

From now on, I will defeat [War] and save the whole world from demons.

‘For that, I should first go to where [Sea] and [Dream] live.’

I want to recruit the protagonist, Yuki, first, but the original work does not mention her whereabouts until January next year.

’10 months until [War] wakes up, no time to waste on uncertainties.’

[Sea] and [Dream], who appeared as foreign strong ones, appeared as natives of the first country that came up as the protagonist fled to [Death]’s domain.

I let out a hollow laugh.

To think that the choice I had turned away from to take a selfish path in hesitation now appears before me.

“I guess I can return to my hometown after a long time.”

To Korea in this world, not the world where my mother is.

Chapter 31 : Change #3

It was around this time that the gardens in spheres that looked like soap bubbles beyond Japan's sky became familiar.

"…It's not possible."

"Is it because that is the law set by that person?"

For the first time, Sumire looked directly at her father and stared silently.

It was the face of a lord leading the family alone on a blood-soaked path, carrying the lives and responsibilities of tens of millions on his back.

Should she blame him for being evil?

Should she blame the things that could have happened due to her father's ignorance?

Should she blame the things discarded due to ignorance?

Hadn't she herself also been trapped in ignorance?

'I, too, was a fool who didn't know where to use my power.'

It was placed in too vast and complex a causality for Sumire to assert.

That's why Sumire presented logic that she herself could understand.

Perhaps for the first time, her true intentions were revealed sincerely before her father.

"It's because I am a magical girl."

"…"

“Because I was Fujimoto and a magical girl.”

Sumire spoke while looking at the blue ribbon in her hand.

“Just as you do, Father, I too wish to take responsibility in my position.”

“…Are you trying to bring down Fujimoto?”

“I wish to [Protect] Fujimoto ‘as well’.”

Great Cause.

That was the answer Sumire had come up with during the two months since the first Dream of Walpurgis.

Eiji looked at his daughter momentarily, at a loss for words.

The person before him was no longer a daughter following his words but another lord standing with her own beliefs.

‘She’s broken as Fujimoto’s successor.’

Eiji turned his back and quietly picked up a Japanese sword placed on the shelf, giving it to Sumire. Sumire grasped that sword with her bare hand, not covered by her sleeve.

Severance.

It was the meaning of gifting a sword.

Even if father and daughter’s beliefs didn’t clash, they were separated into different colors, and Eiji couldn’t accept that. It was just the final farewell to the family jewel he had cherished most for the past 17 years.

“Farewell, Father.”

Sumire quietly left the rooftop garden.

“…”

Eiji muttered while looking at the sky.

“Is human law meaningless under heaven’s law?”

Eiji brushed off from his mind the memory of his daughter, who had become a celestial maiden flying to that distant sky rather than a monarch leading the family, and made plans to lead Fujimoto again.

Fujimoto Eiji was still the ruler of the human world and had too many things on his shoulders.

Four girls approached Sumire as she left the Fujimoto headquarters building.

Among them, Rena casually spoke with her hands in her khaki hoodie pockets.

“So? What are you going to do now, Boss?”

“Don’t worry, I’ll use my personal funds to proceed with finding your families.”

“I didn’t know those people would change their names and hide abroad, so I don’t mind if it takes a long time.”

As Rena said, the families of the group they had found by digging through 10-year-old ledgers in Kabukicho had all changed their names a few years ago and left only traces of disappearing somewhere.

“I’ll have to continue with the Magical Girl Council work while coordinating problems occurring here and there.”

Sumire glanced slightly towards Kaede.

Kaede was still expressionless, but looking closely, she seemed somewhat dejected.

“Kaede, you should return to Mumei now too. I am no longer a Fujimoto person.”

“The Elder has not given any other orders since the mission to ‘assist the young miss.'”

“I am no longer part of the Fujimoto family.”

“I, too, have been expelled from Mumei.”

“…”

Sumire raised her head and looked at the rooftop of Fujimoto headquarters.

She couldn’t understand her father’s such careless handling, as even the lowest Ding-grade members of Mumei were entrusted with secret tasks.

‘To hand over a kunoichi who failed in her first mission without disposing of her…’

Coincidentally, Sumire already had a sword in her hand that could execute external enemies.

And one low-ranking kunoichi who had been used as a touchstone to gauge the enemy because she hadn’t been privy to family secrets.

‘Fujimoto has two swords.’

The villain, who had killed even his brother for the family, had given two swords to his daughter, who was leaving to protect something more significant than the family.

Is this a sign of complete severance or a final gift as a father?

What should be [Protected] now with the two swords in hand?

“For now, it’s time for the regular meeting, so let’s go to the Central Garden.”

“Got it, Boss!”

“Yes, Miss.”

“Yes~!”

“Okay…”

Even if five girls disappeared from the street in a flash of light, no one was shocked or surprised, though they might find it curious.

“They were magical girls.”

“I thought so.”

As the street became quiet again, six girls in white uniforms came running.

They were urgently sending messages somewhere while checking directions on their phones.

“Team leader! Let’s go a bit slower!”

“No, we’re already late! We have to visit 11 more hospitals today!”

“Director Himari sets the schedule too tight!”

“We’re running around because the number of relief corps members has greatly increased! In my time, we rode helicopters!”

“Let us ride helicopters too～”

Uahahahahaha-!

The girls who were running urgently turned their heads toward the source of the sound that suddenly echoed through the street.

Wuggle wuggle

Ten giant shark dolls blocked the main road, advancing and pushing cars away. On top of the largest shark doll was a girl wearing a shark-shaped hood.

Wuggle wuggle

“Praise the shark! The shark is the greatest creature and the hunter of all things!”

“Aah, another magical girl?!”

“Hey! Take it easy! We’re busy, you know!”

“To actually see the march of [Shark].”

Feeling the light entering her star as much as the annoyance, curiosity, and interest sent by passersby, the shark girl laughed loudly.

“Uahahaha! Just by marching, the shark family is growing!!”

The girls from the relief corps, looking at the road blocked by the shark march, asked their team leader:

“Team leader?! Didn’t we have to pass through there?!”

“Aaah… if we miss the schedule, Director Himari will scold us…”

Weeeeee-!

Beepoo beepoo

At that moment, as the siren sound echoed through the street, the girls’ expressions brightened, and they shouted while looking at each other’s faces.

“It’s the security force!”

[You there! Shark! Didn’t I tell you you’d be sealed if you got caught one more time!]

[Don’t move!! Shark!! I’m arresting you for traffic law violation!! There have been several complaints about you at Walpurgis this time too!! We’ll confiscate your starlight for at least a month!!]

A girl with thick eyebrows and a man in his 30s yelled while holding megaphones from the police bus.

Due to the insufficient number of security force members, the fatigue of the Magical Girl Countermeasures Team patrolling nationwide led directly to irritation towards magical girls playing pranks.

[Inspector Yamashita! It’s time for my regular meeting now, so please take command!]

[Aaah Team Leader!!!]

There was a flash of light inside the bus, then the door swung open and girls in security force uniforms ran out with whistles in their mouths.

Yamashita walked out wearily with a face full of fatigue.

Dududu

“1st platoon is the arrest team for the magical girl of [Shark]! 2nd and 3rd platoons, spread out widely with psychic power to stop those damn shark dolls from moving further!”

“4th platoon will handle traffic control!”

“Oh, oh, right! 4th platoon, take one light stick each and control the vehicles!”

Beep!

Beep!

As the security force magical girls moved into their positions in an orderly manner, the situation began to be sorted out instantly.

Twelve girls spread their psychic power widely to corral the shark dolls, and the six-member arrest team used arrest techniques employing Blink to pull down the shark girl.

“Aaaargh, my dream was to realize the ancient giant shark! How futile!”

“Shut up!”

Click

The situation was wrapped up as a security force magical girl, full of irritation from arduous duty, put magical girl countermeasure restraints issued at Walpurgis on the magical girl of [Shark].

“Deputy Team Leader Yamashita, we’ll go judge the suspect in the

garden.”

“Good work.”

Two magical girls disappeared with a flash of light while restraining both arms of the magical girl of [Shark].

“Garden…”

Yamashita muttered while looking at the aerial garden that was growing larger even at this moment.

“The garden of magical girls…”

They were a special existence using supernatural abilities and a heterogeneous group claiming their own rule of law.

At the same time, when their own judgment was over, they fulfilled their duties as members of society and actively blended into society.

“I didn’t expect it to be like this just 5 months after magical girls appeared.”

Shining vehicles flying in the sky or girls drawing attention by playing large-scale pranks.

Girls showing beautiful appearances and outstanding skills.

Girls helping sick people and punishing bad people.

Not just because they wear shining clothes or show transcendent abilities, but because they showed how to lead this somewhat stagnant society with dreams.

People called it magic.

That’s why they called them magical girls.

Yamashita picked up a piece of newspaper blown by the wind.

Rustle

[Whereabouts of the magical girl of [Beginning]?]

[The first and strongest magical girl]

“The magical girl of [Beginning]…”

Suddenly, he recalled that girl he had seen in Odaiba.

A magical girl who fought adults to protect magical girls, surrounded by a mysterious aura.

Magical girls respected or feared that girl who created the current world, calling her the ‘Faceless King’.

She had not shown herself for two months since establishing the garden.

“Deputy Team Leader Yamashita?”

“Ah, I was just thinking for a moment. I’ll be right there.”

As the bus driver called Yamashita who was standing blankly, he put the newspaper piece in his pocket and boarded the bus.

Vroom

As the bus carrying the security force passed by, the passersby who had been watching the security force in the street returned to their original daily lives.

Looking forward to which magical girl would play pranks or show amazing skills tomorrow.

Chapter 32 : Change #4

(A strange person wearing a horse head mask stands in the center of the screen.)

“It’s been three months with a lot happening, but I’ve been continuously working on recreating [Beginning]-chan’s breasts.”

(Failed silicone pieces that couldn’t maintain their shape are scattered around.)

“I even went to a cosplay supply manufacturing company to learn, but it was still too difficult in a personal workshop.”

(Image of a manufacturing draft design with all precise measurements mosaic-blurred)

“Experts pointed out that the body fixing it was too weak compared to the size of the breasts.”

(The horse head mask reinforcing with a blue pen on the design seen earlier.)

“I changed direction to create [Beginning]-chan’s torso, that is, an upper body model.”

(Design plan 2 with complex skeletal structure and material concepts incomparably more complex than the initial design)

“First, I made a test version matching only the approximate cup and waist size, discarding details.”

(Image of a silicone upper body with a T-shirt drooping like a tent from the end of the breast due to the enormous difference between breast and waist size)

“I made it roughly, but it’s really amazingly erotic.”

(Photo of the horse head mask in pajamas hugging it while sleeping, emphasizing the thin waist part by narrowing the T-shirt a few times)

“I tried hugging and sleeping with the temporarily completed test piece… wow…”

(The horse head mask shaking its head)

“Maybe it might change direction to making a full-body mannequin.”

* * *

[Witch Talk: Kyushu Kumamoto Magical Girls’ Chat Room 52]

Miss K: So, I said, ‘Smartphone, please appear!’ and it really did!

Miss K: (Stamp of an excited fat rabbit)

Miss M: Eeh?

Miss S: Really?????

Miss K: Well, it disappeared after 1 minute…

Miss K: (Stamp of a deflated fat rabbit)

Miss M: What, then it’s totally useless www

Miss M: (Stamp of a disappointed cat)

Miss S: Anything even a little complicated uses up a lot of starlight…

Miss M: I used up all my starlight saying, ‘King crab can, please appear!!’ and was sick for 2 days

Miss M: (Photo of eating king crab meat while lying down)

Miss S: What’s with that photo

Miss K: Can’t be helped with king crab

Miss M: So, I was thinking of applying for the performance volunteer work Walpurgis is recruiting for

Miss S: Performance? It's hard to go all the way to Tokyo

Miss K: They say magical girls with broadcasting abilities gather in the garden and upload it as an internet live-stream

Miss S: If popular people like [Nursing] or [Protection] appear, everyone there will instantly fully charge their starlight, and if the King comes, it might be a blooming party that day?

Miss S: (Stamp of an expectant dog)

Miss K: (Stamp of an expectant fat rabbit)

Miss M: That's not it; it's supposed to be a magical girl who was an idol trainee

Miss S: (Stamp of a disappointed dog)

Miss K: (Stamp of a crying fat rabbit)

* * *

"Hmm…"

Tsugumi, the magical girl of [Order], left the on-site command to her loyal subordinate and came to the Garden of Dreams.

The Garden of Dreams, which grows in real-time as much as the girls want, has now grown to the size of a typical provincial city center.

Temporary buildings or stalls set up by magical girls were frequently seen among the green fields and trees, and magical girls living far apart met each other in the garden and exchanged greetings.

"It doesn't look this big when viewed from below; it's amazing!"

Tsugumi didn't go directly to the Central Garden where the Dream of Walpurgis is held.

Instead, she was waiting for someone she needed to meet in a large open space that magical girls often use as a meeting place, calling it the 'Square.'

“Please look at the knitted doll I made!”

“I’ll draw your portrait!”

“Have a cup of tea before you go!”

Several stalls were visible, where unbloomed magical girls were trying to charge starlight by giving joy to other magical girls using their original skills.

This phenomenon appeared because an atmosphere had formed where magical girls implicitly accepted each other’s skills, even if they were at an embarrassing level to show to ordinary people.

‘If Walpurgis hadn’t issued a ban on square stalls for bloomed girls, it would have become a pitiful sight.’

It was Sumire, the chairperson of the council, who suggested that bloomed magical girls, who are overwhelmingly better at attracting attention than unbloomed ones, should preferably not be active in the garden.

The reason was that those who have found their own dreams should hone themselves to a level where they can showcase themselves to ordinary people.

“Ishikawa-san.”

Tsugumi stopped her thoughts and turned around at the voice calling her and saw Sumire, whom she was supposed to meet today, coming with the <Salon> members.

As always, Sumire in casual all-black attire with her long hair swaying, had an overwhelming presence that made magical girls passing through the square glance at her.

“Hello, everyone!”

Snap!

As Tsugumi greeted with a salute at the exact angle, Sumire nodded in acknowledgment, and Rena responded with a playful salute. The

other members just ignored it.

“Did you call me about the security force personnel supplement notice?”

“No, well, I’m going to put that on today’s Walpurgis agenda, but…”

Tsugumi unfolded a piece of paper she had kept in her pocket and handed it to Sumire.

“This is…”

The paper had several photos printed, taken with a digital camera.

The photos contrasted past and present images of abandoned buildings located in various parts of the country.

“It seems like magical girls specializing in fortification or spatial distortion have gathered deliberately to convert them into illegal hideouts.”

While some places had become spaces full of bizarre amusement park-like rides, others had become eerie magical realms with chains and skewers that were chilling just to look at.

They hadn’t seriously harmed ordinary people or injured anyone who wandered in carelessly yet. Still, they occasionally caused noise in the surrounding area or held strange gatherings that frightened nearby residents.

“Groups of magical girls trying to set up hideouts like this and build notoriety are rapidly increasing nationwide.”

There’s a kind of fame and admiration that comes from notoriety.

They had tapped into that point.

Tsugumi hesitated for a moment, then let out a deep sigh.

“We can control magical girls causing disturbances on the streets, but we’re not enough to deal with those who hold out in fortified places like this.”

“They’re groups trying to exploit citizens’ fear while cleverly avoiding Walpurgis rules.”

“That’s right, so I’m requesting help from you, Salon members.”

Rena, Kohane, and Nanami listened to this with a slightly embarrassed look.

The notoriety they had promoted in Kabukicho continued as the name of the armed group held by the council chairperson under Sumire’s rule.

“I understand. If you provide us with detailed locations and information, we’ll handle it.”

“Thank you!”

Sumire felt a headache coming on as she looked at the photos.

If you say this isn’t allowed, they bypass it like that, and if you prohibit that, everything related becomes paralyzed.

Once, because of emission-type magical girls who recklessly fired their abilities in front of citizens and startled them, a law restricting ability use in public places was made, but then entertainment-type magical girls protested in the Central Garden.

-What are we supposed to do, we who gain starlight by drawing, singing, and performing in public places!

So when they allowed entertainment-type magical girls to use supernatural abilities in public places, summoning-type magical girls all rose up and barged in demanding rights for themselves who work in pet cafes or amusement parks.

And then came reinforcement-type magical girls, then fortification-type magical girls, then…

Dizzy

As the nightmare of dealing with complaints from a total of 500 magical girls came to mind, Sumire momentarily felt faint, and her

vision went dark.

“Boss, are you okay?”

“Yes, I was just thinking about something else for a moment.”

Rena looked at her with suspicious eyes, but Sumire didn’t show it.

“Ishikawa-san, are you heading to the Central Garden like this?”

“Yes! That’s right.”

“Let’s go together.”

“Yes!”

As Sumire led the way with elegant steps, Tsugumi, Kaede, Rena, Kohane, and Nanami followed.

Sumire considered the possibilities of today’s agenda items, worried about whether there would be legal conflicts like last time, but the surrounding magical girls stared as if mesmerized by the charismatic appearance of the council chairperson.

“Hello, Fujimoto-san, Ishikawa-san.”

Upon arriving at the Central Garden, the first thing visible was Himari, the magical girl of [Nursing], skimming through documents at an incredible speed.

She processed without a single error while reading through the relief corps’s current status, reports, and dispatch requests, which had now grown to 300 members.

“Yes, hello.”

“I was processing some documents as time was left before the meeting started.”

Himari said while glancing at her watch.

With about 5 minutes left until the meeting time, she organized the documents she had been looking at and put them into the document

bag placed under the glass table.

“…The relief corps seems to be multiplying in number.”

Tsugumi muttered while looking at the endless pile of Relief Corps membership applications.

“It’s the best place for unbloomed magical girls to replenish starlight and has the best public image.”

“…Haah.”

“Everyone knows the security force leader is working hard.”

While Tsugumi and Himari were talking, magical girls belonging to the council entered, and stars of magical girls wanting to watch the meeting were twinkling on the ceiling of the Central Garden.

The quiet Central Garden instantly became bustling with the magical girls who entered, and they sat down in their assigned glass chairs.

Ting

When the seats were somewhat filled, Sumire tapped the teacup in front of her with a teaspoon to draw attention.

“Then now.”

Sumire had already completed her transformation and was wearing a bloomed magical girl outfit reminiscent of a lavender furisode.

Although the skirt length was shorter than a typical kimono, revealing her legs boldly, thanks to Sumire’s inherent dignity, it didn’t look vulgar but rather gave a sense of determination, like sleeves tied up for battle.

“Let’s begin the regular meeting of the Dream of Walpurgis.”

Chapter 33 : The Main Road

September 21st

It was nearly two months since I established the Garden.

“Are you going?”

“Yes, I have a lot of things to do.”

“…”

Master looked at me with a complex gaze for a moment.

Over the past two months, I received help from Master in getting a passport and obtaining various documents.

He also helped me buy things needed for the trip and even dropped me off at Shinjuku Station.

“Weren’t you curious about me suddenly preparing something?”

I joked to the Master, who looked a bit gloomy.

Master relaxed his stiff expression and quietly smiled as he answered my words.

“Haven’t you always been preparing for something as if being chased since two years ago?”

“…”

“I actually knew.”

“…”

“I’m glad that now, even though you grumble with your mouth, your

expression looks so peaceful.”

“…”

We didn’t say anything for a while.

If I hadn’t come to this world, cried for a long time, and then found Master’s shop to eat.

Would I be figuring out how to survive alone by now?

The connection I had built with him over two years, when he was merely a supporting character appearing in the original work, had now become an undeniable part of my life.

He was no longer a supporting character in my life.

“Whatever you’re preparing for, I pray it becomes your happiness.”

Pat

Master placed his hand on top of my head.

His hand, which had been roasting coffee beans until this morning, smelled of the cafe’s aroma that had supported me for two years.

Rough and crude with all sorts of scents mixed in, but it smelled more profound and deep than any coffee aroma.

It wasn’t the ink smell of a few letters in a light novel, but the scent of a father who had lived for 63 years, grieving and living in solitude after losing his daughter.

It was the scent of a benefactor who warmly welcomed a stranger to this world.

“…Was today’s special drip coffee’s main bean Ethiopian Yirgacheffe?”

“After working for two years, you know well now.”

“…Medium grind, taking time.”

“So the aroma doesn’t escape.”

“…Enjoy every moment of brewing.”

“I have nothing left to teach you now.”

“I was good from the start, you know?”

“I don’t think that’s true.”

Master chuckled and then lowered his hand from my head and said.

“Go and come back; your friends seem to be waiting.”

“Yes, I’ll be back. Master.”

Master’s expression wasn’t simply that of seeing off an employee going abroad for a few months.

His expression seemed to reveal the numerous hardships that would unfold for me from now on.

‘Could it be…’

I had never told him that I was [Beginning] or a magical girl. Because he always helped without asking for details.

But maybe…

‘No, it’s probably just that Master has an affectionate personality.’

I shook my head, then greeted Master and approached Ichika and the others waiting in front. As I approached, they started chattering as if they had been waiting.

“Oh, Leader~ It’s your first time going abroad, aren’t you going to dress up?”

“Hikari-chan looks good in anything!”

“Come back healthy!”

“Hehe…”

I felt the solemnity I had shared with Master earlier flying away as I watched my companions speaking lightly.

Actually, unlike residents, the owner of the domain could enter the domain anytime.

They're probably acting like this because magical girls can continue to see each other even when I go abroad.

"The keyword for our meeting room is always the same, right?"

"Ahahahaha! No one else knows that except us!"

Magical girls could meet privately by sharing coordinates of small spaces created in the garden. The keyword we set to refer to our space was…

"Odaiba Magic Show!"

"Ahahahaha!"

"Pfft…"

"Ugh, Hikari-chan sometimes says things that smell like an old man…"

Sorry, Hana-chan.

I'm actually an old man.

"Ichika, then I'll leave the troubles happening in Tokyo to you for now."

"Heh, thanks to the security force guys running around and the Walpurgis guys racking their brains, there aren't many acting up recklessly without countermeasures anymore, but…"

Crack

Ichika said while raising her fist.

"If I catch them, I'll wring them out like a rag."

“…Don’t beat them too much, just moderately.”

“If they wanted to get hit moderately, they shouldn’t have acted up in the first place.”

“Haah.”

“Anyway, I’ll clean your room occasionally too, Leader.”

Ichika, who shows powerful one-on-one combat skills even among born 2-stars, should be able to solve most troubles with her two fists.

Ichika occasionally said, ‘My fists are whining’ and went out at night. She crushed the cute pranks of villain magical girls, becoming an urban legend-like existence in the magical girl community.

I turned to Kyoko.

“Kyoko, I’ll leave the cafe work to you.”

“Leave it to me! This actually suits me quite well!”

Literally, Kyoko often came to help with work at our cafe instead of loading and unloading part-time jobs after that, and many customers liked Kyoko’s cheerful voice and energetic attitude.

She learned so fast that if you consider only skill, the enthusiastic Kyoko gradually became better at many things than I, who had just put in the time.

“Hikari-chan!”

“Hm? What is it, Hana-chan?”

Hana waved her hand gently, signaling a secret talk, and I bent my knees slightly to bring my ear close to her.

“You know~ I helped troubled people again the other day~”

“What kind of people?”

“I helped a grandmother who was sitting down on the street exhausted~ and took a salaryman rushing because he was late!”

“Ah…”

I worried that ordinary people might have been injured experiencing Sato Hana’s transcendent speed, but seeing no particular mention from Walpurgis or the security force, it seemed she had probably protected them with psychic power while taking them.

“This is a secret from Mom too!”

“Haha…”

Actually, it seemed the Sato couple vaguely noticed that Hana was going around helping people a little as a magical girl.

Still, good deeds were a secret shared with friends and a heart-pounding deviation from routine for her.

A deviation from boring daily life being helping others… She was such a pure child that I wondered if it wasn’t fate that this child became a magical girl.

“Hey, Leader~ The train time is almost here!”

“If you want to get on comfortably, we should go now!”

“Is it already that time?”

I picked up the backpack I had left on the bench while talking and wore a black baseball cap to cover my noticeable silver hair.

Just covering my heterogeneous appearance with a cap greatly concealed it and disguised me as an aspiring singer often seen on the streets.

“What’s with that little luggage when you’re going abroad for months.”

“Actually, the longer you go, the less luggage you should take.”

“What about underwear and clothes?”

“There are clothing stores and convenience stores in Korea too.”

“Aren’t you taking things like cosmetics, lotion, towels, or lunch boxes?!”

“Do you think I’m going to some remote grasslands?”

Why would I take a lunch box?

I vaguely realized that in Kyoko’s subconscious, overseas travel was understood as an extension of a picnic and answered moderately.

“Since Leader eats spicy food well, there’s no worry about adapting to Korean food.”

“Hikari-chan, aren’t you scared to go abroad alone?”

“Wouldn’t it be better to book accommodation online from here?”

“Did you study Korean a bit?”

“Hikari-chan, should I go buy a Korean conversation book right now?”

“Haha…”

From these kids’ perspective, it must feel like a close friend is going to an unknown world they’ve never been to, so they’re saying this, but it was somehow funny and they seemed to worry about everything.

Since they’re saying this out of concern for me, I didn’t particularly refute.

“It’s okay, Hana-chan. I studied everything.”

[Narita Airport, the train for Narita Airport, will depart soon.]

We hurriedly walked towards the line where the train was coming in.

“Hikari-chan!”

Hana called me.

“You have to come back well!”

"…"

Suddenly, I remembered the day Hana first called me Hikari-chan.

Her disability of lower body paralysis was so clearly visible that all passersby would either look with pitying eyes or pretend not to see.

That's why the Sato couple avoided crowded places during weekend walks and came into Master's relatively quiet cafe.

-Pretty…

-Hm? Me?

-Yes…

As if it really came out without her knowing, Sato Hana hurriedly lowered her head with the picture book she was holding.

I was happy that Hana, who seemed shy and intimidated, spoke honestly to me. I often spoke to her or acted familiar, and we gradually became friends over two years.

-Sister… am I… not annoying?

-No? Not at all.

-I see… everyone avoids me when they see me…

-I like it when Sato-san talks to me.

-Sister… then… will you… be my friend?

-Sure! Then shall we call each other more closely?

-Hika…ri-chan.

-Yes, Hana-chan.

-Hikari-chan!

I found out that Hana's disability was not a congenital disability that healing magic couldn't work on, but due to an acquired accident,

after she became able to walk on her own.

The futile and tragic accident of their daughter becoming paralyzed in her lower body after falling down stairs while chasing a butterfly was virtually taboo for the Sato couple, so they only told me after the miracle had soothed their hearts.

Sadness over the tragedy of the small child I had seen for a long time.

Regret that if they had told me, I might have been able to use my healing ability earlier.

Desperate prayer that what lies ahead of Hana is now hope, not tragedy.

My determination to make it so from now on.

Various emotions boiled up as I heard her greeting.

I hugged Hana with all my might.

“Hana-chan!”

“Hi…kari-chan?”

“Thanks to Hana-chan, I was able to have courage.”

The small child I had encountered by chance, who didn’t even appear in the original work, had now become a pillar of support in my heart.

“Thank you, Hana-chan! For becoming my friend.”

“Thank you Hikari-chan! For becoming my friend!”

Ding dong

Ding dong

Ding dong

[The train for Narita Airport will depart soon. Passengers please…]

“I’ll be back!”

“Oh, come back safely, Leader!”

“Haha, it would be awkward if you cry here when we see each other in the garden!”

“I’m not crying!”

“Come back safely Hikari-chan!”

I pulled down my cap and boarded the train.

The doors closed and the train slowly moved forward.

The main road my father once told me about.

I was moving towards that road.

[When we had the accident, many people helped us, Hyeonwoo.]

[Dad thinks it’s all because we lived honestly that it came back to us.]

[Sometimes, it might seem right to take a narrow path that only you pass through, but in the end, you’re bound to come back.]

[Be a person who takes the main road.]

* * *

“Hmm…”

Dozens of monitors were flickering in the office that smelled because of garbage bags that hadn’t been thrown away.

In the deepest part of the office, a girl with ash-gray hair grown long enough to cover her back was swinging her feet on a gaming chair.

[Passenger Name: Shirogane Hikari]

[Japan Narita International Airport > Korea Incheon International Airport]

“How can a person’s name be silver light.”

“Ugh! Look at this office smell! Dorim! I told you to clean up a bit!”

“Ah, mister, really!! I changed my name!!”

“What’s wrong with your name being Dorim!”

“I’ve heard the wordplay asking why my surname isn’t Sin and why I don’t go to Sindorim* a million times, that’s why!” *(tl/n: Sindorim is a station on Seoul Subway)*

“So you changed your name to Kang Eunseol?”

“It’s better than Kang Dorim, isn’t it!”

“Anyway, the Minister said to thoroughly grasp and report on the recent situation of Japanese magical girls this time, so organize it well!”

“Shit, am I easy? Always me? Tell that crazy bitch to do it!”

“Haah, you’re one crazy bitch too! You bitch.”

“If you keep messing around, I’ll spill all your search history from last night?”

“Ugh fine~ I’ll go into hiding for a week saying I’m embarrassed and then retire.”

Lelelele

Oh Sanghyuk, the team leader who had stuck out his tongue and made an annoyed expression, threw a pile of documents on the girl’s desk and left.

Flutter

Flutter

On the desk where the documents were falling, there was a dusty nameplate.

[Executive Director, Korean Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team]

“There are other bloomed 2-stars in Korea besides me. Why do they only make me do it?”

Dorim grumbled but put on her ash-gray VR goggles, her unique weapon.

Bloomed born 2-star magical girl of [Cyberbrain]

Kang Dorim

“…No matter how I look at it, our Eunbit seems to be [Beginning].”

For the first time, a serious light flashed in Dorim’s eyes.

Tll/note: While the MC’s name Shirogane Hikari (銀 ひかり) means ‘silver light’ in japanese, Eunbit (은빛) means the very same ‘silver light’ in korean. So this name was just literally translated. This also will be explained later, but I thought it’s better to let you know here what this suddenly popped up name is.

Chapter 34 : Immigration Inspection

I read Korean newspapers on the plane and couldn't help but chuckle.

In Japan, I could only get somewhat distorted or reduced information about foreign news.

Moreover, because I had been busy for the past few months to closely watch the situation in Korea, the Korean situation I had researched since deciding to go to Korea two months ago was just laughable.

[Cybercrime reduced by over 70% since the appearance of the magical girl of [Cyberbrain]]

[The country of quiet internet, the Eastern country of courtesy in the virtual world]

[Should we acknowledge the existence of a 'benevolent Big Brother'?]

[Magical girl of [Cyberbrain]: "Fully recognize the autonomy of the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team and magical girls."]

[Members of the National Assembly silent before the ruler of the internet]

The magical girl of [Cyberbrain], Kang Dorim.

An ability user who can physically dive into electronic spaces to read or track information.

'In the original work, there was no mention of awakened ability users in Korea except for [Sea] and [Dream], who were supposed to awaken while fighting invading plunderer magical girls.'

Similar to how I isolated Japanese magical girls from Fujimoto

through domain declaration, Korea also did not consumptively deal with magical girls due to the overwhelming power of awakened magical girls.

In Korean society, where most things are computerized, and CCTVs are plastered nationwide, [Cyberbrain] would exert influence comparable to a domain declaration.

‘In a society before the advent of [War] that completely destroys infrastructure, this ability is almost invincible.’

It seemed that due to this girl who appeared after the debutante, they had adapted to the era of magical girls in a different direction from Japan. And there was another newly awakened magical girl who was presumed to have healing-type abilities.

[White Wing Unit successfully completes nationwide rounds of treatment for long-term inpatients.]

[Loyalty! We gathered at the nation’s call! White Wing Unit magical girls’ resolution ceremony.]

[Medical magical girl Park Saebyeok, White Wing Company Commander, sheds tears while singing the White Wing military song.]

Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team and the White Wing Unit.

Korean magical girls were forming groups centered around two awakened magical girls.

“Really a country full of fighting spirit.”

Unlike the situation in Japan, where they tried to form a huge faction centered around Fujimoto due to the overflow of magical girls, Korea’s situation of operating relatively fewer magical girls like some kind of state-affiliated official heroes was truly full of spirit.

‘Still, it’s fortunate they’re maintaining a more stable balance than I expected.’

I had prepared to coordinate as much as possible and leave if Korea also had problems with magical girls.

But at this level, it seemed I could quietly execute my plan to recruit [Sea] and [Dream], then secretly declare a domain in a corner of Seoul, and then leave for Russia.

[We will be landing at Incheon International Airport soon, so passengers please…]

I felt my heart becoming more excited as I walked from the landing plane to the immigration inspection area.

“Oh my, President Kim! I just got back from Japan! Let’s go for a drink today!”

“Oh, oppa. I’ve arrived.”

“Eunji~ Dad’s plane just arrived; let’s meet at exit 5.”

“Let’s eat some kimchi stew on the way.”

Familiar language.

Familiar atmosphere.

Familiar air.

The moment when a stranger who had flown into the world of a light novel approached the homeland of another world was thrilling.

Even while understanding in my head that this was Korea in a different world, not the world where my mother was, I was gradually overwhelmed by the familiar atmosphere, and my heart started beating rapidly.

[Passport please.]

“Ah.”

Japanese.

The Korean airport security staff spoke to me in Japanese.

This was not my hometown, and I was still a stranger in this world.

“Here.”

“…”

The staff member who checked my passport while expressionlessly flipping through it looked at the screen in front and stamped the entry permit.

I checked the carelessly stamped foreigner’s mark, put the passport in my pocket, and followed the automatically opening door out.

[Welcome.]

I tried to walk towards the airport exit after passing through immigration.

But urgent footsteps from behind.

“Just a moment! Wait!”

“Yes?”

A middle-aged man in a black suit came running, sweating profusely, and hurriedly stopped me.

A nameplate was dangling on his chest.

[Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team Leader Oh Sanghyuk]

“Huff… huff… d-damn… at my age…”

The man who had followed at full sprint to the point of dripping sweat made desperate gestures, waving his hand and asking me to come to a corner while breathing roughly, and I could only blankly watch.

“No, just, just a moment…”

The man caught his breath and fumbled to take his phone out of his breast pocket. Then, in a small voice, he began reading a memo.

“A, anata wa… uh… ma, mahoo… shojoo… desu ka?”

-Are you a magical girl?

“Mahoo shojoo!”

-Magical girl!

I felt my mind go blank for a moment.

When I acted as [Beginning], I always used perception-hindering magic, so my appearance was never revealed.

Even Fujimoto, who had manipulated all of Japan, accepted the era of magical girls while failing to catch my tail.

But how did this mister recognize me as a magical girl?

“Hey, Dorim! I can’t speak Japanese! Come out quickly!”

Oh Sanghyuk said while looking at his phone, his face red from embarrassment.

Zzzzt

In the direction of that phone’s flash, ash-gray noise interfered and a translucent girl wearing VR goggles walked out.

All sorts of stickers were stuck on her loose T-shirt, and she was an impressive girl with extremely long ash-gray hair covering her skinny body.

Zing-

A laser came out of the ash-gray girl’s VR goggles and quickly scanned me.

[Cyberbrain] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Cyberbrain Swimming

“You. You’re the magical girl of [Beginning].”

The magical girl of [Cyberbrain] quietly said while pointing at me.

* * *

In the end, they desperately persuaded the girl from Japan using a translator.

Oh Sanghyuk, who had brought her to a quiet place, asked Kang Dorim to come in person. He felt his mouth dry up and his stomach churn.

‘We pushed ahead because Dorim insisted so much, but if we’re wrong this time, it’s really over…’

Since the ‘Garden’ was established in the neighboring country, Kang Dorim had been obsessively claiming that [Beginning] would visit Korea and secretly checking the identities of female entrants from Japan using her ability.

It was a serious overreach and illegal act, so Oh Sanghyuk, who was the only one in the countermeasures headquarters who knew what Kang Dorim was doing, had been anxious to the point of raising his blood pressure from stress for the past two months.

“Dorim, logically, when magical girls are overflowing in their own country, would [Beginning] come here?”

“Originally, when the arena is completed, it’s the instinct of troublemakers to leave for the neighboring area.”

“I’m going crazy. What kind of dog-like logic is that.”

“Aren’t you curious, mister? Why magical girls appear in the first place?”

“…”

Honestly, he was curious. Plus, it was the first time he had seen Dorim tracking something with such a serious expression.

“From what I see, she won’t be scared even if we talk to her. Rather, she’ll be like, ‘What’s with these guys?'”

“…What if that girl’s eyes flip, and she causes trouble in Korea?”

“If she were that kind of person, Fujimoto would have been destroyed first.”

“Hey, I’m really nervous; let’s not do this.”

“Just trust me. Anyway, if we can’t talk to [Beginning], we’ll always be debris swept along by the situation.”

Dorim said earnestly while looking at him with anxious eyes.

“You’re actually dying of curiosity too, right, mister? What the purpose of this game is, how magical girls should coexist with society.”

“…Damn.”

For two months, the two of them had secretly been doing this: Dorim would use her ability to compare passport photos of all girls entering from Japan and catch a signal when a candidate similar to [Beginning] was entering, and Sanghyuk would rush to airports or ports nationwide to persuade them.

“Wh-Who are you?!”

“I’m going to report this!”

Naturally, most girls reacted with fright or hostility.

Even then, Dorim, suspecting it was an act, would appear directly through cyberbrain swimming, and scan while comparing with hologram video records. This was now the 4th time she had been disappointed.

‘People pointing out that the countermeasures team’s strange movements are gradually increasing.’

At this rate, it could even develop into a serious diplomatic issue.

Glance

Sanghyuk looked at the girl while hiding his anxious feelings.

Silver hair fluttered in the wind between her black baseball cap, and below that was a girl with a mysterious atmosphere and doll-like appearance.

‘Is she… closing her eyes?’

Snap

Sanghyuk flinched at the cheerful finger snap sound.

“Seeing how you’re staring so intently, it seems you’re about to say something.”

“Uh…?! Korean…?”

Zzzzt

Dorim appeared with ash-gray noise.

“The main body is coming urgently now, but I’ll get to the point first.”

Dorim’s translucent avatar looked at the girl and said.

“You’re the magical girl of [Beginning], right?”

Nod

“R-Really?! Be… [Beginning]? Herself?!”

Sanghyuk stepped back from the girl while breaking out in a cold sweat.

A monster who created the ‘Garden,’ a law-like magic similar to natural phenomena, establishing a magical girl society.

The empress of magical girls who command countless 2-star girls who even make nations bow their heads.

A girl who made the world move by awakening the true abilities of magical girls worldwide in just 5 months.

The Faceless King.

A divine being who could answer the ‘What are magical girls?’ that Sanghyuk and Dorim had endlessly pondered for the past few months was right here now.

The girl they had barely met through a near-gambling level of force was now in front of him.

“Then I have something I want to ask.”

Dorim’s ash-gray avatar said while looking earnestly at the girl.

“What exactly do magical girls exist for?”

The girl quietly turned her head towards Dorim with her eyes closed.

“Why did the red broadcast guide magical girls with such wordplay?”

Sanghyuk started to get goosebumps as he listened to that conversation.

“Why do you want magical girls and society to coexist peacefully?”

Chapter 35 : Immigration Inspection

There are things that become even clearer in the world of 0s and 1s.

The human heart, the movements of society, the flow of groups.

When they have substance, they're incredibly complex, but a surprisingly clear image emerges when everything is converted to points and drawn as a picture.

One girl realized this at a very young age in her corner of the room.

The day she gained a slightly special ability.

The picture began to appear more clearly, and simultaneously, the girl despaired.

All the pictures showed was black.

Was it being drawn in black, or was it black from the beginning?

So she desperately searched for even a single white dot.

Because in this picture, only that white dot could reveal the original color.

* * *

"…"

Hearing such direct speech after a long time was a dizzying feeling.

But is it okay to talk like this in a place like this?

Looking at that mister's expression now, he seems like he might

collapse if I said, “This world will end next year.”

“So-so-so-so-so-sorry!!!!”

Oh Sanghyuk, whose scalp visible through his sparse hair had turned completely pale, naturally stood covering the ash-gray avatar and apologized while bending his body at a right angle.

“This kid is a child who only played games in her room corner, so she doesn’t know how to talk to people properly, and being excited about meeting the magical girl of [Beginning] whom she’s respected for a long time, questions she saw in her dream last night seem to have poured out without her knowing, so with a heart as vast as the sea, please…!”

Oh, Sanghyuk, as if truly out of his mind, unconsciously pushed the avatar girl’s body beside him with his left hand, as if telling her to apologize, even though she had no physical form.

“Dorim! What’s with that way of speaking! Just until yesterday, you were smiling brightly, saying you wanted to go on a Korean food tour together if you met the magical girl of [Beginning]! You’re just feeling a bit gloomy because you slept after reading a sad novel yesterday, right? Right? You often talk like that to the Minister, too, and do weird role-playing! You!”

Sanghyuk desperately scolded and deconstructed Dorim’s words, trying to cover up what Dorim had blurted out earlier as if it were just a silly joke.

But through the waves of the dream world I had spread out earlier, I could feel that the despair Dorim had been feeling for a long time had significantly shaken.

‘Were they feeling their own hardships under the seemingly bright Korean news?’

I didn’t particularly have the self-awareness of being a representative of a specific country who needed to bring benefits to my own country, and rather, the despair and desperation they were feeling was a welcome reality check for me.

There was even a sense of relief that it became easier to talk.

It was very reassuring that there were people who were seriously concerned about the current situation in this way, not just considering their own greed but thinking about others.

‘But the way of speaking is a bit…’

If it’s Korea in 2011, it’s when I was just a little kid too, but I remember it as an era where corporal punishment was barely occurring, and this girl’s attitude was a bit too honest.

Do they not scold for such speech habits in Korea within the light novel?

[Hikari-chan!]

She seems to be about middle school age, just a bit older than Hana at most, and it’s really admirable that she didn’t get drunk on her own powerful ability and stabilized Korean society, but…

“So?”

“Y-Yes…?!”

“…”

I spoke in a cool tone while looking at Dorim’s avatar, which was still staring at me with a desperate expression over Oh Sanghyuk’s pale shoulder.

“Are you done saying what you wanted to say?”

“…”

“What were you going to do if I happened to be someone who came to invade this country?”

“Huk…?!”

“…”

Strictly speaking, it was correct as far as magical girl society was

concerned.

“You’ve probably become so direct in personality because you can control information yourself, but you need to speak while considering the situation and the other person’s intentions.”

As I continued my pointed remarks, Oh Sanghyuk’s pale complexion gradually relaxed, and he seemed rather relieved by my rational response.

The expression on Dorim’s avatar faded, and her eyes wavered, then…

Zzzzt

The ash-gray avatar disappeared with noise.

“Ack, Dorim?!”

“Huu… huff… sorry.”

Kang Dorim’s main body staggered over from beyond the empty parking lot where we were standing.

Her skinny limbs, looking frail even as a magical girl, were sticky with sweat, and her abundant ash-gray hair, long enough to cover her whole body, was tangled and messy all over.

“Sor…ry… huff.”

“Okay, let’s not do that next time.”

“Huu… heuk… huk”

She continued speaking with difficulty while breathing roughly.

“If I… don’t know… hek… everything might… be ruined…”

“Do-Dorim…!”

Even amidst this, Dorim’s eyes were burning with desperation.

“The power to… col-collapse the social system… given to young

girls… indiscriminately…”

Dorim desperately continued speaking.

“And then… as if telling us to fight each other… that strange broadcast… it seems to be encouraging everything to be ruined…”

Huu huu

After catching her breath for a moment, Dorim straightened her shoulders and said.

“Rather than just covering our eyes and pretending not to know, I wanted to ask you.”

Oh Sanghyuk tightly closed his mouth as if giving up, unable to stop her.

“Because all I can show you is honesty.”

“So that’s why you spoke to me like that right away?”

Dorim nodded.

“Please tell us the method of <Magical Girl HAZARD>.”

“What do you think I came here to do? There’s no guarantee that’s the truth either.”

“Debutante.”

Dorim was looking at me with eyes full of conviction.

“I searched through the keywords Japanese magical girls mentioned on SNS and all broadcast records of magical girls, but the magical girl of [Beginning] hasn’t shown herself since creating the ‘Garden.'”

“…”

“If you simply wanted to rule, you would have come forward more actively than anyone, but you desperately tried to separate everyone from the state and make them independent.”

"…"

"At least from my judgment, what [Beginning] wants is the growth of magical girls and coexistence with the original world."

"So that's what you think."

"To me… it looked like a struggle to prepare for some great turmoil."

After finishing all she had to say, Dorim bowed her head to me and said.

"Rather than staying still and being swept away by the flow… I'm going to do something."

Oh Sanghyuk looked at that quietly with a complicated expression, then bowed his head together.

"This kid suddenly acted up, but since I'm here to take responsibility for that… I'll ask for your help too."

"…"

The ambiguous red broadcast and the transcendent power of magical girls arbitrarily given by gods, and society accepts it with desire.

A girl who continued all of this and wrote the conclusion of destruction.

She miraculously stabilized Korea despite the abnormal situation of magical girls appearing and is trying to sense and prepare for the malice of transcendent beings hidden in this situation itself.

They throw themselves into uncertain possibilities, seeking the best in a situation where they don't even know if they're right.

How scared and trembling must they have been while speaking to me?

Nevertheless, they showed me their sincerity.

"…"

They could have threatened me by revealing my identity.

They could have lied outwardly and called for support to ensure safety.

But what they showed was stubborn sincerity.

I saw a quiet dream world except for the waves of emotion I felt from them.

‘I want to help.’

Wasn’t this something I had to do anyway?

* * *

“First of all, let me say this.”

“Yes?”

“…”

Snap!

Cracks slowly form in the space and split apart.

This was not the parking lot where not a single car was visible until just now, but a quiet beach near Incheon Airport.

Time was already approaching evening, and the memory of walking out of the airport exit toward the parking lot was scattering like a dream.

Splash

Splash

Oh Sanghyuk was confused as he felt the waves crashing against his feet.

He was sure they were talking in the parking lot until just now, but his pants were already soaked as if they had been hit by waves several times.

“Let’s properly introduce ourselves.”

With closed eyes, the mysterious girl looked at Sanghyuk and Dorim with her back to the sea, reflecting the sunset.

Rustle

When she removed her cap, her silver hair came loose and fluttered in the wind.

Her swaying hair reflecting the sunset looked like a sparkling silver curtain.

“Magical girl of [Beginning], Shirogane Hikari.”

“Head of Korea’s Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team, Oh Sanghyuk.”

“Magical girl of [Cyberbrain]… Kang Eunseol!”

“…Wasn’t it Dorim?”

“I changed my name.”

“Because people teased you asking if your surname was Sin?”

“Uh… that’s right, but how did you know? You speak Korean so well too…”

The mysterious girl just chuckled while putting her hands in her hoodie pockets.

Her long eyelashes which seemed closed curved gently, and she placed her slender white fingers on her lips.

“It’s a secret.”

Oh Sanghyuk and Kang Dorim could only blankly stare at the girl smiling with her back to the sea.

Dorim suddenly thought that the name ‘Eunbit’ (silver light), which she had called Hikari’s name in Korean style by herself, seemed to suit her very well.

“It’s getting close to dinner time, shall we go eat some soup somewhere?”

“…”

“…”

Chapter 36 : Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Headquarters

We decided to have serious talks tomorrow at the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team's office and took Team Leader Oh Sanghyuk's car to Sejong City, where the office is located.

For dinner, Team Leader Oh Sanghyuk initially suggested going to a restaurant, but we declined.

We decided to just have dinner at a beef bone soup restaurant near the office.

'Kuuah… it's delicious…'

The soup I was eating after a long time warmed my heart, that had lived abroad for a long period.

I thought I didn't mind not eating Korean food while living in Japan for two years. But that was a misconception. The satisfaction rising from the depths of my soul was different.

Slurp

"…Eunbit unnie seems to eat very well, like a Korean person."

"Is that so? Dorim, can you bring some more radish kimchi?"

"Pfft! Kuk kuk kuk kuk cough! Cough!"

Oh Sanghyuk chuckled hearing my words and choked, which Kang Dorim looked at disapprovingly.

As it was late past dinnertime, we were the only customers inside, so

the grandmother at the beef bone soup restaurant glanced at us and smiled.

“Ahem! Khup! That could be… The customer wants more, so you should bring it!”

While Dorim dragged her ash-gray hair and nonchalantly brought the kimchi bowl, Sanghyuk whispered to me, grinning so widely his gums showed.

“It’s a funny scene because there aren’t many people in our country who can order her around like this… kukuku…”

“It seems the magical girl of [Cyberbrain] has a big standing in Korea.”

“Haah, even if it looks like she has a big standing, she’s always looking for chances to poke at things here and there. Until recently, there was an uproar saying Dorim should be confined to a deserted island without radio waves.”

Sanghyuk’s expression turned bitter as he scraped the beef bone soup broth.

The sound of the spoon scraping the plate seemed to represent his frustrated feelings.

“Even though Dorim never did anything bad since before she bloomed, people with many things to be guilty about thought this was their chance and made a fuss putting on a show.”

“…”

“Are you talking about that again, mister? It’s really tiresome! They say when you get old, you keep repeating what you’ve said.”

Clank

Dorim said as she put the bowl filled with radish kimchi on the table.

“Those guys don’t have the ability to confine me, and they know they’ll all die if they touch me, so they can’t do anything anyway.

Just eat, mister.”

“You try getting old! You’ll keep saying things you’ve said before because there’s no one to listen, trying to scrape off the dirt in your heart!”

“More importantly, where is Eunbit unnie going to sleep? Did you book a hotel? Should I charge it on mister’s card?”

Dorim took out a card from her chest and waved it, and Sanghyuk was startled as soon as he heard that, taking out his wallet.

“Why do you have my card?!”

Wink

Dorim imitated a fatal pose and winked at Sanghyuk.

Because a skinny middle school girl with fluffy long hair did it, it looked more like cute antics than seduction.

“Why are you like this between us, mister? Let’s not act like amateurs.”

“What kind of relationship do we have?! We’re just an uncle and a kid living next door!”

“I guess you two live in the same apartment?”

Dorim nodded casually, and Sanghyuk looked at her as if dumbfounded and silently wiggled his hand urging her to give the card back.

“Eunbit unnie, just talk casually to me!”

I guess she’s calling me ‘Eunbit’ because Shirogane Hikari means silver light.

“Should I?”

“You were speaking casually earlier, why so formal all of a sudden… Unnie came from Japan but speaks Korean so well.”

"…I guess you studied Korean hard over there and came?"

Sanghyuk, who was drinking water after finishing a bowl of beef bone soup, looked at me with subtle expectation, and seeing that, Dorim blurted out.

"Does someone eating beef bone soup for the first time put radish kimchi juice in it too?"

"Oh, so you liked Korean food."

"That could be, liking the food, learning the language, Eunbit unnie is gradually getting to know Korea."

"Wow, Dorim is saying nice things."

"From now on, listening to Korean music, and watching movies, wouldn't that be good?"

"Right, I also gave Korean movie tickets for the theater near our office. Miss Eunbit, would you like to watch it alone when you have time?"

"Eunbit unnie, want to come to my house and play games? There's this game that's super famous abroad, it's really amazing! They say the Korean server will open soon, too. Let's play together on the foreign server!"

The two, who had been bickering until now, seemed to be subtly implementing the 'Welcome to Korea' operation with tiki-taka.

Why are they calling me Eunbit so familiarly?

'But it doesn't seem bad.'

My appearance was difficult to specify as being from any particular country in the first place. If I could get a temporary identity to carry around in Korea with the cooperation of these two, it might be convenient to approach the prickly [Sea].

"So unnie, where are you going to sleep?"

“If you haven’t made a reservation, I can book a hotel for you.”

“Do you have a room like a lounge or night duty room used in the office?”

“Ah, given the nature of our office, we have an abundance of night-duty rooms. But will that be okay?”

“I just want to be quietly with you all.”

“Then I’ll empty one where other employees can’t enter. Use it comfortably.”

Swish

Sanghyuk said as he snatched the card Dorim was holding.

Dorim struggled to take the card back, but Sanghyuk successfully managed to put the card in his wallet.

“Shit!”

“It’s my card; why do you keep taking it?”

I’ve felt this from earlier, but Dorim didn’t give the impression that her physical specs had increased despite blooming as a magical girl.

Is it because I’ve only seen strong ones like Ichika or Hana?

Swish

“Eek?! What are you doing, unnie?!”

‘I can really lift her lightly.’

Click click click click

“Hahaha, you two look so close! Miss Eunbit! It would look better if you lift her higher!”

“Like this?”

“Ah, why are you taking pictures of this! Delete them!”

Crack

Ash-gray lasers came out of Dorim's hands and hit Sanghyuk's phone, causing the photos to start being deleted.

Sanghyuk seemed to have known this would happen, as he didn't panic and just got up to go pay the bill.

[Some argue that the reduced crime rate due to magical girls and democratic procedures should be viewed separately…]

[…closely watching the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team moving like an extralegal investigative agency.]

The news channel the beef bone soup restaurant grandmother had on was talking about various stances on magical girls and the barely maintained balance in Korea.

[Exploitation targeting supernatural ability users similar to Japan's supernatural ability weaponization plan is occurring in various places abroad…]

[…In Europe, the existence of criminal groups composed only of supernatural ability users is being mentioned.]

[On the other hand, the government has stated it will respect the freedom of Korean magical girls and that they, too, as citizens…]

'I haven't heard news like this in Japan'

It seems news from abroad reminiscent of Fujimoto's affairs was also cut.

Korea can speak relatively loudly about this issue, so they're proudly announcing it. There was information I had missed like this because I couldn't watch the internet due to reception fees or time issues.

"Eunbit unnie."

"What?"

"Are we really okay?"

"…"

I didn't understand the intention in Dorim's question, but at the same time, I understood what she meant.

"We'll be fine."

"I see."

Neither of us seemed to understand exactly what the other meant, but we both seemed to understand what we meant by our answers.

* * *

The Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team's office was in a moderately repaired building that had been used as a government residence for the Ministry of the Interior and Safety.

Sanghyuk opened a night duty room in a corner of an annex with a structure difficult for general employees to access.

"All the bedding is inside, and you can use the bathroom comfortably."

"Don't you two need to go home?"

"What's the point when there's no one there anyway."

"Actually, we've both been staying at the office and night duty rooms more often than home these days."

Both of them seemed to be people with complicated circumstances.

"We'll be sleeping in the main building, so contact us if anything happens."

"Don't you two need to watch me? What if I slip away quietly?"

I suddenly felt mischievous and said with a slight smile.

Sanghyuk and Dorim looked at each other and shrugged.

"If the magical girl of [Beginning] runs away, what can we do?"

“We’d just be in trouble overnight.”

“Okay. I was just joking, so don’t worry about it.”

“Then sleep well, Eunbit unnie!”

“How about we have breakfast together at the bakery in front at 8 tomorrow?”

“Yes, see you tomorrow.”

The two of them kept chattering as they left the annex.

When their voices could no longer be heard, I lay down flat in the quiet night duty room and closed my eyes.

‘Should I go to the Garden?’

At this time, it seemed no one would be awake, and I didn’t feel like sightseeing while wearing an illusion veil, so I gave up.

I had secretly watched the council for a month, but Sumire was leading well on her own.

[…In Europe, the existence of criminal groups composed only of supernatural ability users is being mentioned.]

The content of the news I heard earlier at the beef bone soup restaurant.

No matter how you look at it, that must be the plunderer magical girls composed only of 2-stars that the protagonist encountered in Russia on the way to [Death]’s domain to meet a dead person in the original work.

‘Those guys were also pulled by the gravity of fate and bloomed early in the end’

Most magical girls are concentrated in Japan, and the rest are evenly distributed in Korea, China, and Russia, but hundreds of magical girls also exist in Europe and Central Asia.

‘The few magical girls there are treated almost like saints in their respective countries from the moment they know how to use their power.’

The real villain magical girl group [Scavenger] that advances while swallowing most of those hundreds of stars.

Their viciousness was at the level of having completed blooming just from the notoriety that was heard.

Magical girls with unknown origins who chase after fighting itself were depicted as threatening even in lands overflowing with demons.

[Revenge], [Sword], [Bombing]

Anxiety rose as I heard news of those guys I couldn’t pay attention to because their areas of activity were so different.

‘Ugh, this damn anxiety again.’

Feeling like the worry disease that Ichika often pointed out was coming up, I covered myself with a blanket and tried to sleep.

Chapter 37 : Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Headquarters

[Kang Eunbit]

Inside the nameplate with the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team's logo, there was a hastily taken photo of me with the white wall behind the office as the background.

My face in the photo was slightly retouched to remove some Western features, changed to a level that could barely pass as a mix of Asian and Western.

It was such a subtle retouching that when comparing the photo to the real person, you might think, 'Did I see something wrong?'

"From now on, Eunbit unnie is a Korean citizen born in a local foreign worker family who attended a rural branch school in Gangwon-do."

"It's been a week since Miss Eunbit, who originally lived in the countryside, was discovered late to be a magical girl and is having an adaptation period as an intern, staying at the annex of the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team."

"Just show it casually when regular employees ask, 'Who are you, and why are you following us around?'"

"It seems it will take a long time to make a full-fledged disguise identity, so you can just use this to the extent that you can temporarily present."

Dorim and Sanghyuk completed an alibi for my existence in an

instant, exchanging words with each other without pause.

‘But is this okay?’

I just expected a foreign volunteer or high school exchange student identity, but quite an official identity was created.

“How far can I use this identity?”

“Well, it depends on how far Miss Eunbit decides to reveal her identity from now on, right?”

“If you go to Yeouido and do a magic show saying ‘Accept me as a citizen, you bastards!’, you might even get a passport issued that day.”

“Naturalization of a bloomed magical girl? Wow… even with just Dorim and Park Saebyeok, the country was in an uproar; I wonder how much of a festival it would be.”

If I really did that, the friends I left in Japan would literally call me into the Garden with the threat of shattering their Glass Stars, an emergency Walpurgis meeting would be convened, and all of Japan’s news would report my naturalization (=return).

All magical girls would be shocked, saying, ‘Ehhh?! The Faceless King was actually Korean?!’

‘Hmm…’

It was tempting enough to want to record it as a special hidden camera episode, but I decided not to because I wasn’t confident I could handle the aftermath seriously.

‘Let’s maintain the stateless, mystery concept when acting as [Beginning].’

With only 8 months left until [War]’s advent, it was barely enough to soothe the current companions as much as possible and recruit new ones. This kind of disruption wasn’t good.

“Thank you, I’ll use it well.”

“It’s nothing, then from now on…”

Click

Sanghyuk connected the laptop he brought from the office to the projector placed in the small conference room where only we were, then turned on the power.

“Do you two go hiking together?”

The laptop’s background was a photo of Dorim with black hair braided so long it dragged on the ground and Sanghyuk in hiking clothes, awkwardly putting their arms around each other’s shoulders on a mountain peak.

The photo didn’t fit the screen ratio so it was chunky and cut off, and in the blurry photo, Dorim looked droopy like boiled vegetables, while Sanghyuk had his eyes closed.

“We went to shake off all the bad memories together before Dorim became a magical girl…”

“Ah, stop saying unnecessary things and just start the PPT, mister.”

Crack

As ash-gray lasers shot out from Dorim’s hands, the background instantly changed to a clean monochrome default background, and she found and executed the PPT file among the work security folders.

[Global Supernatural Ability Manifestation Situation Report (2011.9.22.)]

“It looks like a grandiose title, but it’s just everything strange I gathered through cyberbrain swimming.”

“Most of the PPT content is about the Japanese situation where there’s a lot of confirmed information, so what I want to tell you is towards the back.”

Scroll

Scroll

Along with the sound of the mouse wheel scrolling, the recent situations of named magical girls in Japan (Sumire, Himari, etc.), and how the Garden was running passed by.

Because the Japanese media was excited about the appearance of magical girls and pushed back news from abroad, I was at a loss for words when it moved to the accurate recent situations of countries around the world that I couldn't properly see through newspapers or news.

"This is…"

"Actually, the attitudes of Korea and Japan towards magical girls can be seen as quite unusual when viewed globally."

"People who come asking to borrow magical girls from other countries are all surprised."

Somewhere in Europe, inside a magnificent white marble building with a dome-shaped roof, three girls were wearing dresses made of dazzlingly white fabric and shining belts decorated with golden thread.

Those who had been given terminal diagnoses were shedding tears of joy as they regained health with just one gesture from the girls. And the enormous crowd watching this was bowing their heads to the girls.

"In other regions where the number of magical girls isn't as high as in Northeast Asia and Russia, this level of treatment for magical girls using full-fledged healing abilities that appeared before and after the debutante is common."

An Indian girl, decorated so much that her entire body looked golden due to the light, was wearing a veil on her head that seemed to be over 10 meters long.

The crowd gathered to watch dozens of servants carrying that veil praised and bowed to the goddess incarnate.

“All those people prostrating there are high enough in society to be ranked among the world’s richest.”

“The bald bearded mister in a suit in the very front row is a director of some successful PMC company.”

“…”

“There are several countries that have argued that the red broadcast is a ‘prophecy to give birth to divine incarnations through competition’ and that we should wage a war to steal stars from magical girls of other countries.”

Desire.

“The debutante itself that happened in Japan became a topic because of the high proportion of Japanese magical girls, but globally, including ordinary people, they’re still taking the ‘steal the stars’ part of the ‘red broadcast’ more deeply.”

“It’s rather ironic that Japan, where the majority of magical girls are, is calm.”

Plunder.

“Except for Japan, where magical girls are protected by the Faceless King, and Korea, China, and Russia, which quickly incorporated them into national groups and operate them as human resources, this kind of strongly religious atmosphere is dominant.”

“Actually, we forget because of Company Commander Park Saebyeok who goes around the country doing healing activities, but the miracle of healing the sick is worthy of being called a divine miracle just by its existence.”

“Which country was it? The Middle East? There was even talk of a 2-star magical girl successfully carrying out a coup d’état alone.”

“There’s a rumor that the U.S. will soon implement a magical girl recruitment operation worldwide.”

“They’re being very cautious about Eunbit unnie’s words because

they don't really know the operating principle of magical girls."

I felt my mind going blank even while listening to Dorim and Sanghyuk's exchange.

I thought I had avoided the Fujimoto-style magical girl bibimbap by pulling the gravity of fate through the debutante, which was no different from a future knowledge cheat, to raise the level of magical girls in one go.

'While the regions where the majority of magical girls are located are barely maintaining peace, this is no matter how you look at it…'

A powder keg.

It was the appearance of desire overflowing and about to burst.

The madness that dominated Japan just before the Fujimoto disturbance in the original work.

"Really… this is worse than I thought."

"Eunbit unnie didn't know because countries trying to make a move on Japan were holding back out of caution for you, but actually, it's the most tempting honey pot, so their desperation to test the waters is extraordinary."

"Korea too, many hesitate to come test the waters from abroad because they're cautious of Dorim."

"Well, my ability is kind of like a cheat key in modern society."

Dorim blurted out a self-praise and spun around on the swivel chair.

"Was it because of these things that you said you had something to ask me, that you were anxious?"

"…"

I thought that as the magical girl of [Cyberbrain], encountering this kind of information would make <Magical Girl HAZARD> itself feel like a kind of powder keg.

It was a scene where it wouldn't be strange if they were seized by madness at any time and waged a war to steal stars, and 2-star girls who harbored hatred for society ran wild while fighting.

"That… this… it's just my intuition so I didn't put it in the PPT to show others."

"Okay."

"That woman who gave us the Glass Stars at the first red broadcast… well, god? devil? anyway."

Dorim spoke to me for the first time with a slightly pale, terrified expression.

"I don't know if I felt this because my ability is like this or before I bloomed, but I just felt from that voice that everything should be ruined."

The will of the evil gods.

"It's like a will or resignation saying to fight quickly and show your true nature because you will be ruined anyway? Ah shit, I'm getting confused as I say it."

"…So the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team tried to maintain Korean society in its original form? While protecting themselves by showing the power of magical girls?"

Instinctively rebelling against the will of the evil gods.

"Well, that's part of it…"

"As for me, I just followed along since I suddenly became team leader for the merit of bringing this kid."

Sanghyuk shrugged with a humorous smile, and Dorim was about to say something seeing that but then chuckled.

They soon laughed as if they had thought of the same thing.

"…I shouldn't have gone to the mountain together then."

“Why? It’s heroic and good.”

“Hero, my ass, while trying to dump me on a deserted island.”

“Dorim is right.”

“Huh?”

“What?”

“Humanity in this world will be destroyed next year at this rate.”

Hearing those words, Dorim and Sanghyuk were looking at me with slightly surprised eyes.

I was strongly impressed by the two who were moving forward, relying on each other even in uncertainty.

“I came to Korea to prevent that.”

“…”

“…”

Sanghyuk and Dorim started to focus on my words.

Chapter 38 : Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Headquarters

October 14

“White Wing! Magical Girl of [Medical] Captain! Park! Sae! byeok! I’ve come to the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Headquarters on official business!”

“Ah, yes… co-come in.”

Step step

The girl in military uniform who entered with short pink hair and a light pink aura undulating took a deep breath.

“Hmm… the smell of makeup!”

The scent of perfume or shampoo that 1-star magical girls belonging to the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team were giving off as they came and went after finishing volunteer activities using supernatural abilities was coming from all over the building.

A sweet fragrance as if the building itself was dyed pink.

‘A smell that can’t be found among our unit members.’

Park Saebyeok, who came from an all-girls middle and high school and was serving in the military, knew all too well that there could never be a fragrance in a place where only women gathered.

This was the scent of makeup and pretense planted by society.

She was very displeased.

“Kang Dorim! Where is Kang Dorim!”

Park Saebyeok sniffed and remembered the magical power smell of the person she had to see today.

A smell like carbonated drinks and potato chips mixed and sprinkled on a keyboard, then left for a week.

Slam!

“Eek?!”

“Pa-Park Saebyeok?! Why are you coming here again?!”

“Hey! Go play at your unit!”

The 1-star magical girls belonging to the countermeasures team, who were resting while eating snacks, looked at Park Saebyeok in shock.

“Excuse me for interrupting your break.”

Slam!

“Kang Dorim!”

“Aaah?! Are you an assassin sent by the Minister?!”

“Oh, Team Leader, excuse me. White Wing!”

Slam!

“Kang Dorim!”

“Ah, Park Saebyeok! Why are you making a fuss again!”

Kang Dorim controlled her avatars while watching dozens of monitors placed throughout the office, and snack crumbs and half-finished drink cans were scattered around the office.

And there was one person cleaning it up.

‘Hm? A new person? Her hair color is similar to Kang Dorim’s, is she a relative?’

A woman wearing a neat women's suit skirt with ash-gray hair tied back was slowly cleaning the office.

On the nameplate dangling over her particularly noticeable chest was written the name Kang Eunbit.

"Park Saebyeok, why are you barging in here again."

"Is it so annoying for a supernatural ability user to visit the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Headquarters?"

"Crazy bitches like you are annoying."

"I may not be your superior, but I am your elder, so wouldn't it be better to show some respect?"

"What are you talking about, you're just a newbie private at best."

"I was commissioned as an honorary captain after completing the nationwide treatment tour this time, though?"

Dorim responded regardless of Park Saebyeok's words.

"Yeah yeah, Captain Korea elder, please leave."

"Service period doesn't matter! What's important is willpower!"

"Yeah yeah, elder, please take your dentures and leave."

"More importantly, patients! We need patients that our proud White Wing unit needs to save next!"

"You're really crazy; we already have three company members on standby at major hospital intensive care centers across the country."

Park Saebyeok shouted in a resolute voice as if Dorim's words were not even worth considering.

"It makes my teeth chatter to think that there are still sick citizens whose voices can't reach even us at this moment!"

Kang Dorim grumbled and threw a list, and Park Saebyeok retrieved all the dozens of documents in midair before they fell to the floor

with a disciplined posture.

“It’s a request for support from local transportation hospitals across the country, so go check it out.”

“Thank you! I heard you sometimes do healing volunteer work with your avatars, too. How about joining the White Wing unit while you’re at it?”

Kang Dorim quietly raised her middle finger.

Park Saebyeok looked at it as if displeased.

“Excuse me… Company Commander.”

“Yes?”

“I’m sorry, but could you move aside? I need to clean up the trash underneath.”

“Ah, excuse me.”

Park Saebyeok stepped back in a disciplined manner and looked at the girl named Kang Eunbit.

Kang Eunbit was nonchalantly picking up trash and putting it in a bag when she suddenly asked Park Saebyeok.

“By the way, how long have you been enlisted?”

“Hmm, I enlisted in July this year, so it’s been 3 months now.”

“Captain, in 3 months after awakening special abilities…”

Kang Eunbit’s eyes, which had been closed all this time, trembled. She mumbled a few times before bowing her head deeply.

Park Saebyeok tilted her head as if she didn’t understand while watching this.

“Oh right, Kang Dorim.”

“What now?”

“I heard there’s an unbloomed 2-star magical girl discovered in Busan this time. Is it still difficult to persuade her?”

“I tried to persuade her because I heard she’s been quitting school and just going to the beach for 2 years, but it was a complete failure.”

Flinch

Kang Eunbit was surprised to hear that conversation, but Park Saebyeok and Kang Dorim, who was looking at support request forms and monitors, respectively, didn’t notice.

“I heard there are American headhunters going around trying to scout magical girls who aren’t affiliated with state institutions.”

“Not just America? Brokers from Europe, the Middle East, and Africa are hanging around with all sorts of excuses, so she seems to hole up whenever she sees a foreign broker.”

“Hmm, she seems to be quite a sensitive person.”

Tap!

Park Saebyeok grasped all the support request forms after fully understanding them and held them straight.

“Anyway, I understand. I’ll be going now.”

As she was passing by, Park Saebyeok glanced at Kang Eunbit, who was still cleaning up trash being generated in real-time, and said:

“Kang Dorim, how about cleaning the office yourself instead of leaving it to others?”

“Eunbit unnie said she’d do it because she’s bored.”

“I said I’d do it because I’m bored.”

“Why is Miss Eunbit ‘unnie’ and I’m not ‘unnie’!”

“You’re just a crazy bitch.”

“That’s really unpleasant! But I’ll forgive you!”

Snap!

“White Wing! Captain Park! Sae! byeok! Returning after completing business at the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Headquarters!”

Kang Dorim responded with her middle finger to Park Saebyeok, who was in a salute posture.

* * *

We had a hectic schedule over the past 3 weeks.

Three weeks ago, Sanghyuk and Dorim calmly accepted the fact that magical girls would someday have to fight demons and that the evil gods wanted <Magical Girl HAZARD> to fail by having society collapse through people’s desires before that.

-Can you believe it so easily?

-Well, with magical girls appearing worldwide and what Miss Eunbit, the magical girl of [Beginning], has shown, even if we can’t fully believe it, we should at least consider it.

Sanghyuk said, shrugging his shoulders as if by habit.

-We can’t cover our ears and say we can’t believe in the existence behind it while believing in the power of magical girls that we can see right now.

-There’s a bit of difference between vaguely feeling something and someone telling you, but what we have to do is the same.

-What’s important is the direction rather than small details.

The two people who treated the fact that humanity would be destroyed as a minor detail talked about what Korean magical girls should be guaranteed before the domain declaration in earnest.

1 – Recognize the council as an equal independent decision-making body, not a subordinate organization.

2 – Respect the countermeasures team and White Wing unit as state-recognized affiliated organizations like the relief corps or security

force.

3 – The Garden will function as a protection agency for magical girls, not a representative agency of a specific country.

They even wrote a pledge to protect magical girls in all matters but not intervene in *the* interests between countries.

“Now we just need to submit this as an agenda.”

“The problem is that there seem to be more people who won’t view this purely.”

“[Beginning] is*,* after all*,* a hero of Japan, she’s never been active in Korea.”

“Then shall we just do it ourselves? I can do it even now.”

“Ah, Eunbit unnie, please wait a moment.”

Dorim stopped me with a serious face and said:

“Even for me, who’s purely Korean, I think people who talk about deserted islands won’t just let it go without a catalyst.”

“The work of civil servants is always like this.”

Sanghyuk shrugged once and said while tapping the desk:

“We know clearly what needs to be done, and how to do it is decided, but we can’t start because there’s no public opinion.”

We stared at the completed plan and pledge for a long time before adjourning.

After that, Sanghyuk carefully sounded out opinions while going back and forth between ministerial meetings and the Blue House. Dorim was busy organizing magical girl-related issues occurring in various countries.

Just as I went in the direction of maintaining the social system while thinking of Sato Hana and Master, I thought it would be good if we

could find the maximum point of agreement since what Dorim and Sanghyuk want to protect also exists in Korea in this world.

“Eunbit unnie, let’s go eat some soup.”

“The beef bone soup place?”

“Yeah, it’s hearty and tasty there.”

“The broth was thick, and there was a lot of meat too.”

“Really unnie, won’t you just naturalize to Korea?”

Well past lunchtime, Dorim told me, who was cleaning, that the beef bone soup restaurant was known to those who knew in the neighborhood, so it would be crowded if we went at the regular time, so we should go this late.

“Then, unnie, let’s wash our hands in the bathroom and go.”

“Okay.”

I dusted off the women’s suit I was wearing because Dorim said no one would touch me if I acted like her secretary and went outside.

‘Even though I changed my hair color to match Dorim’s, no one seems to care.’

Perhaps because it was well past lunchtime, the streets were more deserted than expected, and we arrived at the beef bone soup restaurant we visited on the first day I arrived in Korea.

“Owner! Two regular orders here.”

“Oh~ Dorim’s here! Okay, two regular orders!”

Dorim was controlling her avatars while looking at her VR goggles even as she ordered the meal.

“Dorim, I’ve never seen you take those off completely, don’t you get dizzy?”

I get dizzy with just 6 clones, but.

“As long as the radio waves are connected, I can handle hundreds or thousands easily.”

I was genuinely impressed.

While she lacked noticeable combat power or physical strength, her ability in information gathering and analysis was transcendent.

We waited silently for our meal, and I watched the news in the beef bone soup restaurant because I had nothing to do.

Suddenly, red subtitles reading ‘Breaking News’ appeared on the news channel reporting entertainment news.

[Breaking news, the mysterious explosion accidents that occurred during magical girls’ healing events in Europe were all by the same perpetrator…]

[While suspected to be terrorism using supernatural abilities…]

[Our correspondent reports that a coup using supernatural abilities has succeeded in the Middle East…]

“Uh… sh-shit?!”

Dorim suddenly shouted as if screaming, breaking out in a cold sweat.

“U-Unnie!! Let’s go back to headquarters right now!!”

Dorim’s eyes, having taken off her goggles, were shaking violently.

The report of a pale-faced announcer continued on the TV news channel visible behind such a Dorim.

[Breaking news!]

[We have news that the Chinese government has declared a state of emergency and is carrying out missile bombings towards its own territory!]

Chapter 39 : Seeds Harboring Malice

Near Manchester Victoria Station in England, there was a shop in an alley that sold cheese sandwiches that locals had tasted at least once.

Mrs. Brown, as generous in physique as in personality, would wake up at 4 AM to prepare cheese sandwiches that even people from the neighboring Piccadilly would come to eat.

[SOLD OUT]

Mrs. Brown finished her morning routine by setting aside just one sandwich and putting up a sold-out sign.

Sitting in the shop and turning on the TV, news about the terrorist attack that happened a few days ago was constantly coming out.

[The girls who have lost all their power can no longer use healing abilities…]

[Such large-scale robbery incidents have also been confirmed in the Middle East and China…]

[Hundreds of saints who appeared worldwide have lost their power…]

The announcer was delivering the news with a grief-stricken face as if witnessing angels falling from heaven.

It wasn't a particularly relatable story for Mrs. Brown, who had genes that allowed her family to live over 90 years without minor illnesses for generations.

Knock knock

“Mrs. Brown! I’m here!”

“Come in.”

Mrs. Brown welcomed Emily, the clever village child who had grown up so suddenly, no, who had now become a proper lady.

“I’ve put it on the table there, so take it.”

Emily smiled brightly as she put the sandwich Mrs. Brown had set aside into the cloth bag she brought and placed some bills on the table.

It had been a promise between them since the day Emily, who had been adopted by the neighborhood church, first ate Mrs. Brown’s sandwich.

“People who came from Piccadilly and made a wasted trip might get angry if they see this.”

“Oh my, are there no bakeries over there? Don’t worry too much about it.”

Emily was the pride of this alley.

The sight of a brown-haired kid with glasses carrying around brick-like books that even adults found difficult was familiar to the people in this neighborhood. While other children of the same age were learning words like apple, butterfly, and cheese, she was devouring papers published in academic journals.

Eventually, the bookworm who read papers while eating sandwiches in front of Manchester Victoria Station succeeded in entering Oxford at the age of 11.

That day, the alley was full of customers asking if there was a football match they didn’t know about because of the cheers echoing through the alley.

“It still feels like yesterday, but you’re already getting your doctorate this semester…”

“I hurried a bit because I have things to do from now on.”

“If it’s you, I’m confident I wouldn’t be surprised even if you appeared as a politician or scholar moving the world.”

“Haha, thank you.”

Emily, who was expressing her gratitude with smiling eyes, suddenly looked at the TV playing in the shop.

The announcer was still reporting about girls who had their stars stolen along with terrorism around the world, with an expression as if the world had ended.

“That’s what happens when you depend on and cling to such miracles.”

Mrs. Brown had run this shop in place of her husband, who passed away early due to heart disease, and succeeded in raising five strong sons and marrying them off splendidly.

She was proud of the family peace she had achieved alone with her own hands.

“The world has always been unfair and fierce, not knowing that means someone else was taking the hit for you.”

Mrs. Brown, perhaps annoyed by the announcer’s voice, who was now crying and whining, waddled over to turn off the TV, and Emily watched this scene with utmost adoration.

“That’s right, Mrs. Brown.”

“You too, Emily, achieved your degree among those pseudo-smart kids who just pour money and delay graduation at university, didn’t you?”

Mrs. Brown, perhaps seeing her own life in the fierce life of Emily, who was much younger, held her hand tightly and said:

“This world is a war. We’ve always fought and won to achieve our lives.”

“Mrs. Brown, you should be proud of yourself.”

Hearing those words, Mrs. Brown smiled like a sunflower.

Emily hugged Mrs. Brown and whispered:

“Congratulations on your victory, Mrs. Brown.”

“Thank you, Emily. My little laurel crown.”

Emily, who had exchanged words of blessing with Mrs. Brown, disappeared far away, with steps like a lark, towards the church that was her home.

Mrs. Brown shuffled back inside the shop to make the lunch menu she had to sell at lunchtime.

Emily passed by the sanctuary as she went to her room inside the church in the alley.

Inside the sanctuary, people were praying for the success of tomorrow’s challenge and seeking comfort from God while ruminating on the pain of defeat.

Everyone was continuing their big and small fights in their own lives.

‘May everyone be victorious in their own fights…’

Emily walked through the gloomy corridor where creaking sounds echoed and sawdust flew.

Creak

When Emily opened the door, there was a woman in black clothes with knives all over her body.

Although it was black attire with a strange sheen, it wasn’t difficult to guess what caused that sheen due to the bloodstains falling around.

“You’re here, Anna.”

“Looks like I’m the first to arrive?”

The woman's face was mostly covered with a leather hat and mask, and several leather straps were wrapped around her legs, visible below the skirt.

Countless razor blades and daggers were stuck in the leather straps with their sharp blades exposed.

"Thanks to the bombs Alex lent me, it was easy to attract attention; they all went crazy when I just slit one throat?"

"Haha, I can never get used to Anna's methods."

Thud

Crash

Several large potato sacks were in Anna's hands, and when she put them down on the floor, a faint sound of glass breaking was heard.

Anna, with her blood-red pupils reduced like albino eyes, said while glistening:

"Each one isn't much, but it starts to feel strange when you really gather about 100, like connecting to the world…"

"It's hard for me to imagine what that feels like?"

At the innocent response, Anna narrowed her eyes, which had momentarily become dreamy, and glared at Emily.

"That's because you…"

"Anyway, Alex and Anna succeeded, and what about Doctor and Li?"

"Doctor is running wild controlling puppets in the Middle East, and Li walked to China."

"More precisely, she flew riding on a sword."

"I'm jealous that everyone except me can fly."

"If you leave it to the Doctor, Anna could fly around, too. Should I talk to him separately?"

“No thanks, it’s undignified for the magical girl of [Revenge] to fly around like a robot in cartoons.”

Emily giggled and then unfolded the map she had kept under the desk. She scribbled red markers on the European region and triangle shapes on the Middle East and China before folding the map.

“What’s the meaning of that action?”

“I have to mark separately the areas where tactical objectives have been achieved and areas where operations are ongoing.”

“It’s really amazing. You’re finding magical girls all over the world just by using your head even though you haven’t bloomed yet.”

“Hehe, human behavior patterns are simpler than you think.”

Emily stroked the books on the desk and said in a gentle voice:

“When you put an invaluable treasure in front of them, wouldn’t they put it in the place they think is safest?”

“That’s only easy from your perspective.”

Anna carelessly flipped through old maps placed on Emily’s desk with her blood-covered hands. Compared to the current operation map, different types of plans had been written.

“It seems even the smart you had many unexpected parts, seeing all these failed works scattered around.”

“Uuu… originally, I shouldn’t have had to meet you guys even by pulling the gravity of fate!”

Emily sighed deeply and made a crying face.

With her messy brown hair and glasses, making such an expression made her look like a high school student who had failed an exam.

“It’s… ‘Animus’ doesn’t know which side’s apostle [Beginning] is either! Even though those who use distorted aliases of magical girls can’t use power!”

“Hmm, it seems even the smart personality doesn’t know everything.”

“Plus, the four apostles are bound by the gods’ contract to be active from the day of advent in June next year, so she doesn’t know why they’re already going around declaring domains.”

Hearing those words, Anna casually asked about something she was secretly curious about.

“Heh, isn’t it meaningless if that woman suddenly goes around the world declaring domains?”

“Animus says not to worry because the areas that can be ruled by domain declaration are limited due to the restrictions set by the gods.”

Anna nodded and then flopped down on Emily’s bed behind her.

The white sheets had now become almost black due to blood.

“By the way, it’s troublesome… of all things, the apostle who awakened alone is active from the land where the goddess’s remains fell.”

“What does that mean?”

“Animus is worried that the seeds that should get used to chaos while preparing for future battles might lose their way in peace.”

“That really sounds crazy; just fight in my domain in advance to get used to it because you’ll have to fight in the future?”

Anna crossed her legs, wrapped in black stockings on the blood-soaked bed and sneered.

“They say the apostles are protectors set by the gods, but what they’re actually doing is throwing them off a cliff.”

“Are you perhaps thinking of ‘that person’…”

“Shut up before I rip your mouth open.”

“Sorry, hehe.”

Emily cleared the desk full of maps and books and sat by the window where the light was coming in, mumbling while eating her sandwich.

“Still, according to Animus, magical girls like you who possess the fully bloomed third light of struggle are free even within an apostle’s domain, so you can fight as much as you want.”

Anna took out her blood-red Glass Star and looked at it.

Inside the Glass Star, a third light burning in an ominous dark red color was faintly shining between two large lights.

“You’re 3-star, I’m 3-star too. So if the goal is achieved, I can just kill you and absorb your power?”

[Try if you can.]

Anna turned her gaze to the side and looked at Emily.

The pupils visible beyond her glasses were fully dilated, containing madness rather than the wisdom from earlier.

Due to the sunlight coming through the window, her expression wasn’t visible, but her reddish-brown burning pupils were clearly visible.

[Do you think a world made by merely attaching others’ starlight is equal to the world created by the gods?]

Emily’s brown hair, visible between the shadows, was overflowing with a red aura.

“I get it, so stop glaring. Show-off.”

“Hehe, Animus sometimes sets the mood, but she’s a good kid!”

“She’s just crazy.”

“By the way, why isn’t Alex coming?”

“She said [Beginning]’s domain might still be difficult, so she went

east with a bunch of Doctor's puppets to test the waters around it."

"Oh dear… if Alex said she's going to test the waters, I wonder how many thousands will die."

Anna turned her head incredulously, and the room was filled with silence.

"…Come to think of it, you seem like the real crazy one."

"Why~?"

"It's confirmed that you'll essentially die next year when the goddess's apostle devours your personality, but you're cheerfully laughing, chattering, and eating."

Emily smiled brightly at those words.

"Isn't Animus the one accurately understanding and trying to practice this world?"

Because humans have lived by fighting and killing and should disappear while fighting themselves.

Chapter 40 : Where and What to Become

I drank the black tea on the glass table while hiding my still slightly trembling hands in my cloak since seeing the news yesterday.

The deep aroma of black tea spreading from my throat, along with the sweetness of sugar, helped calm my mood.

After receiving worried calls from friends first last night and comforting them one by one, I used the time I had until the next day to inform Sumire, the council representative, about the inside story I knew.

Sumire thought briefly, with her hands folded modestly, and then opened her mouth.

“A ritual where already bloomed 2-star magical girls evolve one step further through plunder…”

A small sigh escaped between her lips as she listened intently without a hint of disturbance in her posture.

“If this were to be known, it would cause unimaginable terrible chaos that I don’t even want to imagine.”

“…”

“Even the media, who were passive about reporting overseas news while watching out for Fujimoto, are paying attention to this simultaneous large-scale plunder.”

“No one will know yet why the terrorists are doing this.”

“Magical girls, including the council, don’t know more than the

concept of blooming and dreams that you've told us."

"…Are you upset that I hid it?"

I saw again the surprised expression I hadn't seen during the month I secretly watched Sumire after establishing the Garden.

Sumire returned to her original expressionless face, but it was noticeably softer.

"There's no need to tell subordinates everything, especially if it's to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings."

"Anyway, I apologize for not anticipating the current chaos."

"Even in private, a monarch's apology shouldn't come out lightly in front of subordinates."

Sumire put her hands in her kimono sleeves and said in a firm voice, narrowing her fine eyebrows.

"We are just those who help you make better decisions, not those you should bow your head to. How could we find fault when your intentions are in the great cause?"

No, I can't say anything.

I think of Sumire more as a CEO leading the <Magical Girl Company Japan Branch> that I forcibly appointed rather than a friend or colleague like Sato Hana or Ichika.

'I think of myself as in the position of a major shareholder.'

Fortunately, Sumire belonged to the type of diligent CEO who tries to understand and maintain the investor's intentions within given rules, rather than an evil CEO obsessed with short-term performance or considering the company as their personal property.

As soon as she realized Fujimoto's methods were wrong, she completely changed the direction of the council.

'I came on a business trip to farm talent from abroad after setting it

to auto mode, but she's trying to treat me like a real king.'

The problem is that she seems to think of herself not just as a CEO but as a subject who has really come under me.

Even though it was that cruel and inhuman Fujimoto Eiji, I got goosebumps when she said she had cut ties even with her own father and left.

"Because there's already a domain spread in Japan, I can't create many more domains, but those who will belong to the Garden will gradually increase."

"If there's a great cause, people will naturally gather there."

"If uninvited guests are entering the domain, I'll rush to save the magical girls who called me king."

"Then I and the other leaders will risk our lives to save those with ordinary dreams until the Faceless King arrives."

"…"

Sumire stood up from the glass chair and slowly bowed her head with a perfectly angled posture.

I still had complicated feelings about whether just one teaching and opportunity could change a person this much.

'Actually, Sumire's inherent nature of wanting to protect something hasn't changed.'

It's just the difference between a wrong path due to ignorance and a right path someone taught her.

"Then I'll be going out again."

"I wish you good fortune."

* * *

"Fucking hell! Fucking cowardly bastards!"

Bang

Kang Dorim kicked the trash can in the office with all her might.

Trash spilled out and a loud noise sounded, but Oh Sanghyuk just bowed his head with a gloomy face.

“Fuck!! Those crazy bitches could come anytime now!! And you’re talking about security? Secuuurityyy?”

For the few days Sanghyuk tried to arrange a meeting with the plan to seek protection from supernatural ability terrorism through [Beginning]’s domain declaration and [Beginning]’s pledge to respect the will of Korean magical girls, he only heard two things.

-For security reasons, it’s difficult to arrange a meeting or conference with VIPs right away with a supernatural ability user whose identity hasn’t been confirmed, especially one who has only been active abroad.

-The opinion that it should be resolved through a trustworthy route is dominant because the possibility that [Beginning] is the leader of the terrorists cannot be ruled out.

Sanghyuk’s head throbbed at the reality of having to go around a lot because of the old men’s suspicion disease that couldn’t grasp reality.

‘If we revealed that [Beginning] was staying in the country, they seemed ready to surround and detain her with the military.’

The detailed damage situations in China, the Middle East, and Europe were treated as confidential, but from what Dorim could find out with her ability, all that could be said was that it was a dangerous situation.

70% of the state-recognized magical girls of the European Union who participated in a joint event in France died or were seriously injured and had their stars stolen, and government facilities were paralyzed by bombs. And they failed to catch any clues about the suspects.

Some small countries in North Africa where a magical girl’s solo coup d’état was reported to have occurred were completely cut off from communication.

‘China has completely locked down its external communication network and is only carrying out missile bombings on its domestic cities one by one.’

The United States was officially dispatching an aircraft carrier fleet to Europe while strongly demanding that each country’s government fully disclose the current situation of supernatural ability users.

Some members of the National Assembly argued that White Wing unit members should be put on US fleets for protection.

‘They’ll probably try to detain supernatural ability users who have never been officially confirmed on the American continent under the pretext of protecting them in their homeland because it’s dangerous.’

Japan, despite being the country with the most supernatural ability users, was just silently watching the situation closely as it had completely lost control over its own supernatural ability users.

In the first place, they didn’t care because the person who held that control was in the same building.

Although it was an emergency situation involving supernatural ability users, even the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team was forbidden from entering the secret bunker under the pretext of security.

What on earth was the reason for checking Dorim, who had never committed any misconduct in her 13 years of life and had only done good deeds since becoming a magical girl, to this extent?

‘They’re probably wary of us rebelling after seeing the Japanese government become such fools.’

He already knew the answer, but Sanghyuk felt his chest bursting with frustration.

I understand why they refuse to give up the initiative in this situation at all costs, but it’s been a day since the situation occurred and they’re still using security as an excuse. Do those old men think we didn’t do it because we couldn’t?

“F…uck… I really can’t be a civil servant.”

“…Mister.”

Dorim, who had been shouting and getting angry in the corner, suddenly called Sanghyuk calmly.

“What.”

“Let’s do it.”

“…”

“If we don’t do it and even slap them, I don’t think we’ll ever be able to persuade those old men.”

Sanghyuk raised his head and looked at Dorim.

Dorim was quietly looking at the office wall with her fist tightly clenched.

“If we do it, we’ll probably get a lot of criticism, but there’s no other way.”

It was the first time he had seen Dorim’s small fist clenched tightly since they had gone hiking on a hot summer day. Dorim left the office and walked somewhere.

-…Seoul doesn’t look that shitty from afar.

-Right, Dorim? Life might look shitty up close, but when you look at the whole picture, it’s quite beautiful.

So let’s not hate people.

So let’s live liking people.

It didn’t seem like a coincidence that he suddenly remembered the promise they made that day.

Ring ring ring-

The phone number of the VIP’s security officer was on the suddenly

ringing phone.

“Hello, this is Oh Sanghyuk, head of the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team.”

* * *

Glance

The path to the secret bunker where VIPs and ministerial-level personnel were having an emergency countermeasure meeting was known precisely only to a very small number of security officers working at the Blue House.

Therefore, the person in charge of escorting the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team was driving a special vehicle in which the outside couldn’t be seen except for the front seat, which was blocked by a partition.

“…”

“…”

On the CCTV screen that could monitor the back seat in real-time, Team Leader Oh Sanghyuk and the magical girl of [Cyberbrain] could be seen sitting awkwardly apart, with their mouths tightly shut.

“We’ve arrived.”

The vehicle stopped with just a fingernail’s width gap in front of the bunker entrance, and the only place that could be entered through the opened back door was the corridor inside the bunker.

As Sanghyuk walked through the bunker’s concrete corridor, he seemed to understand why they had told him to wait one more day.

‘They’ve blocked all radio waves and electronic devices, are they wary of Dorim’s ability even when meeting through video?’

They placed one security personnel at each square end of the corridor and confiscated all of Sanghyuk and Dorim’s phones. Then, they started moving after checking their entire bodies with metal detectors

and other inspection devices.

Every time they passed through a corridor, they blurred their sense of direction by going back and forth several times under the guidance of a security officer with blindfolds. Then, they opened and closed doors several times to make the internal structure unknowable. This seemed intended to block escape routes if anything happened.

‘They’re going overboard, so this is why they never let Dorim enter inside the gates of the National Assembly and Blue House no matter what.’

They called Kang Dorim only after coming to the point of judging that the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team needed to be completely controlled before making a decision.

Finally, the interview preparations were completed with two female bodyguards holding Dorim’s arms on both sides and bodyguards standing behind her.

Sanghyuk felt like he wanted to cause a disturbance by shouting ‘Did you think we didn’t do it because we couldn’t?’ with his insides boiling, but he held back.

He couldn’t interfere when the person enduring the most humiliation was enduring to arrange this meeting.

‘If Dorim had really been treated like this, I would have almost said let’s cancel what we said on the mountain.’

Clank

The iron door opened, and the interview that would determine the future of magical girls began.

Chapter 41 : Where and What to Become

“Welcome, Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team.”

Inside the huge iron wall were ministerial-level personnel and aides from across the country after the state of emergency was declared, as well as Yang Seokmin, the 17th President of the Republic of Korea.

Oh Sanghyuk growled as he spoke, as if something was boiling up again at the greeting of the man who had raised his approval ratings by selling the name of the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team, which he had hastily created in his third year in office, when all presidents are said to face difficulties.

“…Did you have to go this far?”

“It would have been fine if it was just me, but many ministers said we should be cautious given the gravity of the matter, so it couldn’t be helped.”

“Then couldn’t you have just called me alone?”

“Team Leader Oh Sanghyuk.”

Minister of Public Administration and Security Lee Cheoljin, who had been quietly listening beside him, quietly restrained Team Leader Oh Sanghyuk.

While it might be understandable within the Ministry of Public Administration and Security, where the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team was located, if he showed personal emotions even in this place, his future life as a civil servant would become difficult.

As President Yang Seokmin, who had been watching the situation for a moment, gave a nod, one of the aides from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs began briefing the situation.

“Early this morning, an agreement was reached with the leadership of the United States and China through the hotline.”

“…”

“Externally, the U.S. announced that they would only identify the personal information of supernatural ability users in Northeast Asia, but aircraft to transport the remaining supernatural ability users from Korea and China are already at U.S. military bases in Korea.”

“…What?”

“This is top secret information conducted only through face-to-face letters and calls by a very small number of personnel from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.”

The aide showed Team Leader Oh Sanghyuk a paper with the plan for this emergency evacuation operation printed on it. That paper was a document with hurried notes on China’s top-secret deployment map of supernatural ability users.

“Currently, half of China’s state-recognized supernatural ability users who were dispersed in Sichuan and Shanghai have died or lost their abilities due to a single supernatural ability user, and the remaining half, 120 girls in Beijing, are passing through the West Sea aboard naval vessels.”

“…They couldn’t stop them even after firing all those missiles?”

“That’s correct. So the Chinese government has classified this situation as a supernatural ability terrorist attack targeting human resources and passed an emergency evacuation operation to isolate the 120 remaining supernatural ability users from the terrorists.”

The aide turned to the next page, which contained instructions from the U.S. military.

It stated that they would intervene urgently, defining the current

situation where most of the recognized supernatural ability users in Europe and North Africa have died or lost their abilities as a wartime situation threatening national strategic assets.

"…And according to what the Ministry of National Defense has confirmed, large explosions caused by supernatural abilities and tumultuous internal movements that were seen in Europe have now been confirmed in Pyongyang as well."

"Pyongyang… North Korea?!"

"The number of supernatural ability terrorists in the Eurasian continent identified through U.S. military satellites and put on international wanted lists is 4 in total, and they are presumed to be targeting state-recognized supernatural ability users in Europe, Asia, and North Africa."

"Are you saying we can't stop them with the military, so rather than having everything stolen before our eyes, we should send them to America?"

"…At least if we can send them to the American continent, we can buy time."

After confirming that the Foreign Ministry aide's explanation was over, President Yang Seokmin looked at Team Leader Oh Sanghyuk and spoke.

"The supernatural ability users that the Republic of Korea has agreed to send to the United States are 72 members of the White Wing unit, including Captain Park Saebyeok, and 15 members of the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team."

"…So you're telling us to stay here and not interfere all this time."

"Please understand it as a temporary protective measure."

"…If the Republic of Korea could enter [Beginning]'s domain, we could evacuate supernatural ability users before they are threatened."

"Team Leader Oh Sanghyuk."

Silence

President Yang, who had been speaking in a gentle tone, said in a cold voice for the first time.

“Don’t cross the line. The supernatural ability users of the Republic of Korea are citizens of the Republic of Korea before being supernatural ability users.”

Kang Dorim, who had been silent for a long time listening to the conversation between Oh Sanghyuk and President Yang Seokmin, finally opened her mouth.

“…I see, so you want to maintain the framework of ‘belonging to the state’ no matter what.”

At that remark, the bodyguards on both sides tightened their arms to prepare to subdue Dorim in case of any situation.

“Miss Kang Eunseol, this is an emergency situation involving national strategic assets.”

“If they’re such important assets, why are you hurriedly sending them away across the sea?”

“It’s because an agreement was reached due to aligned interests between countries.”

“For example, was it agreed that those who can use the power of magical girls evacuated to the U.S. can be sent under the control of the members of parliament, ministers, and the president who agreed to this operation?”

“That’s an interesting imagination.”

“The power of magical girls is made up of precious dreams obtained from where they live.”

President Yang Seokmin turned around with an expression that there was nothing more to hear.

“The magical girl of [Beginning] said she would guarantee the rights

and safety of magical girls within the domain, apart from the logic of the state.”

Bang

“Damn it, did you submit a proposal to sell out the country just to spout such groundless statements!”

Minister of National Defense Jang Iksu, who had been looking at Kang Dorim with displeasure from behind, couldn’t hold back his anger and slammed the desk as he spoke. It was too rough an action to be shown in a public place, but President Yang Seokmin did not restrain him.

“In the first place, it’s not enough to naturalize or persuade that girl to Korea, but you’re going to offer up supernatural ability users with eyes wide open?”

“It seems you’re saying that you use unknown power given by an unknown being well when it’s useful, but when it comes time to protect it, you only deal with it according to the logic you know, and incidentally regain lost authority.”

Jang Iksu, who had used Kang Dorim’s ability to track down the scammer who had deceived his son, and had used the healing abilities of White Wing unit members to cure minor illnesses of his mother-in-law and other relatives, hurriedly blurred the point.

“Isn’t that different from offering everything to someone whose name we don’t even know!”

“You’ve been saying everything you shouldn’t in front of the ministers.”

“What are the bodyguards doing! Confine her immediately!”

The bodyguards completely surrounded Kang Dorim and began to drag her toward the solitary cell inside.

Oh Sanghyuk was watching this with his eyes tightly shut.

President Yang Seokmin had no intention of changing his mind

through this interview.

He was just confirming the intention to decide the future course of the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team.

‘Although Kang Eunseol’s ability is regrettable, power that cannot be controlled must be discarded at this opportunity.’

This is the only chance to grasp the whereabouts of supernatural ability users who can escape through radio waves.

If control over the use of supernatural abilities returns to the Korean government according to the conditions set by the U.S. government, the activities of the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team would no longer be necessary.

“Team Leader Oh Sanghyuk is also under a state of emergency…”

Snap

[Deception] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Dream World

Perception Acceleration

All people whose perception abilities were extremely extended maintained only their breathing while stopping, and Dorim slipped out of the bodyguards’ encirclement by slightly twisting her body.

Sanghyuk narrowed his eyes to check the situation and then stood beside Dorim(?).

Snap

“In the situation… ugh?!”

“What?! Who are you?!”

“[Beginning]…?! That bastard Oh Sanghyuk!”

“This is a national secret facility! Do you both know you’re punishable by death!!”

“Bodyguard!!! Bodyguard!!!”

Bodyguards tried to run out to call the support team due to the lack of electronic devices. Bodyguards rushed to grab Oh Sanghyuk and his group, and ministers shouted in unison, giving in to anger and shock.

The scene inside the bunker was chaos itself.

[Deception] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Dream World

Perception Change

* * *

In front of my eyes, those who were just about to get angry and shout were gradually falling into confusion.

They were calming down, feeling as if they were lying on a cozy bed wearing sleeping socks and luxurious pajamas, stroking a cat, and the bodyguards were standing blankly with expressions like ‘Why are they telling me to catch my friend?’

I had discovered how to use it to change others’ perceptions beyond mental imagery through consistent combat training with Ichika since before the debutante, but I still felt guilty about using it on humans.

‘But resolutely, now the lives of everyone and the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team are riding on my back.’

Only Yang Seokmin and Oh Sanghyuk were accurately aware of the current situation.

President Yang Seokmin realized the current situation and broke out in a cold sweat.

“…Team Leader Oh Sanghyuk, this is treason against the state.”

“You shouldn’t have done that to Dorim and our kids.”

“Are you putting personal emotions into state affairs?”

“…You’ll understand if you work in the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team.”

“What? What are you trying to say!! What do you want to do even while selling out the country!!”

“This power cannot be controlled by things like the state or law.”

“…What?”

“…I’m saying they were just staying still because the kids are kind, Mr. President.”

Bang!

“Mr. President! Urgent information from the Joint Chiefs of Staff…?!”

The security officer who came running through the corridor to deliver the news shouted while being confused by the situation inside the bunker, and President Yang Seokmin, who had been confronting Oh Sanghyuk with a glare, shouted:

“Just say it! What’s the situation!”

“The supernatural ability terrorists presumed to have struck Europe and Pyongyang are advancing toward Seoul on a giant flying vehicle!!”

The security officer continued with an unbelievable expression.

“They are advancing by breaking through all anti-air systems! They will approach Seoul in about an hour!”

* * *

“I thought it might be the case, but you really were going to abandon us.”

“…That’s how it turned out.”

“It’s okay, unnie. More importantly, is the mister okay? Is he not

hurt?”

“Yeah, he’s still beside me.”

“I told Park Saebyeok not to follow and to hold out in Jongno.”

“If it’s [Bombing], she’ll try to rampage in the most flashy way.”

“Your other avatars are where Park Saebyeok is, right?”

“Yeah, I’ll use all the power allowed to me to cover northern China and the entire Korean Peninsula with a domain declaration.”

“How long?”

“This time I couldn’t prepare, so it’ll take a while… about 1 hour? I probably can’t use much power during that time.”

“I’ll tell the kids to escape to the Garden as soon as the domain appears.”

“Yeah, let’s protect them.”

“Under the third light, I, the magical girl of [Beginning], declare.”

[Under the third light, I, the magical girl of [Deception], declare.]

Chapter 42 : Where and What to Become

Rattle

Rattle

Ting ting ting ting ting

Whoosh-boom!

All types of anti-aircraft weapons including anti-aircraft guns, anti-aircraft missiles, and Vulcans poured toward the giant cobalt blue airship measuring 200 meters in length.

Its overwhelming size, equivalent to a 50-story building laid horizontally, was so huge that it could be hit even with eyes closed. However, the curtain widely surrounding the airship blocked all projectiles from the weapons.

Boom

Boom

Boom

The moment projectiles touched the curtain, explosions occurred, blowing away warheads and high explosives. Unlike reactive armor that should be disposable, it instantly regenerated and filled its place.

The airship, which should be extremely vulnerable to firearms, was leisurely advancing toward Seoul, wrapped in an explosive curtain that was the epitome of irrationality.

“These bastards must be rolling in money, firing so fucking much.”

[Kihihihi, aren't you tired of messing up three countries already, Alex?]

"Still, aren't I like a first night bride waiting for her husband with her skirt up compared to Doctor?"

A voice with such heavy slang that it was confusing whether it was English echoed inside the bridge, and a girl's voice with a noisy Middle Eastern accent responded through the radio.

Clink

Clink

As the long blonde-haired girl wearing a tank top over cobalt blue military pants shook her head to the sound of explosions, scratches engraved on her side cut were sparsely visible.

All her ears were densely filled with piercings, making clinking sounds every time she shook her head.

[You're getting close to Beginning's domain; didn't you shit yourself from fear?]

Alex understood the advice hidden in Doctor's joke but ignored it and growled.

"You mother… fucking thing… war is originally about, fuck, going wild until you die with a hard-on…!"

Alex, whose pupils were dilated with excitement and face flushed, muttered toward the air while breathing roughly.

Along with her panting breath, sweat was dripping, and she was twisting her legs while rubbing her whole body with both hands.

Doctor knew about Alex's seizure symptoms, so she didn't particularly care.

Bang

Bang

Bang

Endless explosion sounds.

Explosion sounds came to Alex's ears.

Perhaps there were fewer times in her life when explosion sounds didn't ring in her ears.

"A-air raid alarm… it's an air raid alarm…! Explosions! Yesterday was the next village…! Today is our village…!"

[Kihihihi, there's no one crazier? It's enough to give me chills on the other side of the earth.]

Alex, who had been muttering, suddenly became serious and returned to her original sneering expression.

"Doctor, more importantly, have you deployed all the puppets?"

[Kihihihi, while you were doing your pole dance, I stuck them under the bridges so the guests can't escape, Alex.]

"The gift boxes?"

[My intelligence quotient is about 4 times higher than yours.]

"Don't talk shit, Doctor."

* * *

Bang

Bang

Bang

Rattle

Rattle

Boom

Endless explosion sounds. And through the thick smoke, the giant cobalt-blue airship could be seen approaching.

The one who brought one of my avatars to the sky over northern Gyeonggi, where the flying vehicle was approaching, was the bloomed 1-star magical girl of [Gliding], who was serving as a platoon leader among the White Wing unit led by Park Saebyeok.

After hearing Kang Dorim's request, Park Saebyeok ordered her to summon a dark gray hang glider and bring me here.

"Now I'll leave the operation area!"

"Yes, thank you… and I'm sorry for making you come to such a dangerous place."

"It's okay! We became stronger by receiving the power of the stars to do such things!"

"When the domain is completed, make sure to lead your platoon members to escape to the Garden."

"Haha! If we abandon patients and run away, we'll be punished for desertion by the company commander!"

"…Are you going to return to Seoul right away?"

"Yes! If patients occur, our White Wing unit must step up!"

The magical girl of [Gliding] saluted me with her sports sunglasses perched on her tied hair glinting, and I nodded in response. The airborne insignia on her military uniform suited her very well.

"White Wing!"

Whoosh!

She let go of the hang glider and went into free fall, then summoned a new hang glider and flew back toward Seoul.

After watching her disappear into a dot in an instant, I looked back at the airship in front.

‘Since I can’t use large-scale barrier-type illusion magic for a while, this time I’ll subdue them at once with perception and illusion.’

Wheeee—

Bang!

Rattle rattle

Bang!

Noise.

Endless noise.

My ears were deafened by the wind sound and explosions continuously hitting my ears.

Fully bloomed 3-star magical girl of [Bombing].

Alex.

The notorious Alex was a Scavenger who appeared in the original work.

Among the Scavengers, [Sword] had relatively clear action goals. [Revenge] never showed her face throughout the story and only showed mysterious appearances before suddenly disappearing. And [Bombing] could only be described as a mad criminal steeped in madness.

I never imagined that villain magical girls who originally came only after [War]’s advent and the trials of demons began would come to Asia this early.

‘Is it because the story has already deviated enough from the original work?’

I don’t know why villains who should appear in volumes 4 or 5 are suddenly having group seizures at a point where even volume 1 hasn’t started yet, or why there’s one more person in the Scavengers, which originally had 3 members.

But what I have to do is clear.

‘Kill her; this time I must kill her.’

The Glass Stars needed for a bloomed 2-star girl to achieve full bloom of struggle: 100.

She has already killed or plundered over 100 magical girls.

Not content with that, she came to kill and plunder even more magical girls.

This is not a world made of a few drops of ink in a light novel.

The smiles and lives she took away are real.

Grip

For a moment, the faces of the girls I rescued from the research facility having a sushi party, the girls coming and going to the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Headquarters, and the faces of Dorim, Hana, and Ichika flashed through my mind. I gripped the hang glider handle tightly.

Kill her.

Must kill her.

I accelerated the hang glider I was holding through psychic power toward the airship.

Whoosh

Feeling the wind brushing my ears as I accelerated, the cobalt blue giant body now appeared like a wall in front of my eyes. And the closer I got, the louder the explosion sounds became.

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

The sound of the curtain activating in response to the anti-aircraft system was so loud it made my skull vibrate, and I activated dozens of layers of psychic curtains in front of the hang glider.

I gripped the handle with all my might, and tremendous vibrations and explosive sounds engulfed me.

Ratatatatatang!

Bang bang bang bang bang bang

Beep—

After the explosive curtain had been activated and regenerated, it exploded again, and through the chain of regeneration, I gradually wedged through the gaps and finally came face to face with the airship.

Due to the continuous explosive sounds, I felt dizzy and had ringing in my ears.

It was fortunate that those explosion sounds were no longer audible.

'If I didn't know the method, I would have had to go around for a long time… thank you, Yuki…!'

I followed exactly the method Shikishima Yuki used in the original work, spreading multiple layers of flame curtains to break through, and it worked so easily.

However, at that point, Yuki, who had evolved into a 2-star magical girl, was described as panting after breaking through, but thanks to the difference in specs, I broke through smoothly.

I felt elated, as I seemed to benefit from the original work for almost the first time since the debutante.

Crash!

I fell from the hang glider and rushed toward the bluntly protruding bridge at the bottom of the airship, letting the wind pressure created by the shattered glass window carry me.

The floor and ceiling, in my view, mercilessly flipped, mixing the scenery inside the bridge.

I rolled around chaotically like that and then tried the falling technique Ichika had taught me to correct my posture.

The bridge roared and shook.

Military pants glimpsed far away.

A person startled by my sudden intrusion.

It's Alex.

[Deception] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Dream World

Perception Acceleration

Stand

Alex, who had hurriedly bent down to pick up the tactical bag that had fallen to the floor, stopped due to the extremely extended perception acceleration, and I aimed at her neck with psychic power.

Crack

Alex's head turned completely around, and our eyes met.

She was smiling.

'A magical girl's lifeline is tougher than an ordinary person's!'

I used psychic power to compress Alex's chest bones left and right.

Screech

Due to the magical power being drained in real time by the domain

declaration, I couldn't crush her. I engaged in a tense psychic tug-of-war with Alex, but while maintaining a narrowly dominant situation, I gradually pressed down.

Crack

"Guhuk… ughk… Doctor, you fucking bitch! You said it was sturdy!"

Blood came up to Alex's mouth as her neck dangled.

Crack

Crack

Crunch

I cast Blink toward her, whose upper body was completely crushed and delivered a drop kick imbued with psychic power.

Although the mass contained wasn't transcendent because I was of average female weight, the physical force imbued with magical power unique to magical girls rushed in and pulverized her body.

Splash!

I shook off my legs in the air to correct my posture and sharply gathered psychic power into a hand blade to strike down with a horizontal slash.

Crunch!

Alex could be seen twitching due to rigor mortis between the completely split flesh pieces.

"…"

I didn't lower my guard while looking at the flesh pieces twitching due to postmortem rigidity and the vibrations of the bridge.

Sticky blood was clinging to my whole body, giving off a terrible smell.

It was my first murder, but there was no wavering in my heart as I

recalled the smiling faces of Dorim, Hana, and Ichika.

“Huff… huff…!”

Still, as it was my first fight imbued with killing intent, I felt my chest pounding and my hands and feet going cold.

“…”

This isn’t a Scavenger who would die obediently like this.

She will surely try something even after death.

I raised my hands and maintained a defensive posture.

[Bombing] is vicious.

Glance

‘The Glass Star isn’t visible…!’

Alex was originally wearing a top with little cloth area to cover, and I checked by stepping on her lower body shaking from the vibrations below, but there was no hard Glass Star visible anywhere.

Whoosh

I opened what was presumed to be Alex’s tactical bag with psychic power without touching it and poured it out.

Roll

Dozens of small bombs flickering with cobalt blue magical power fell down, and I got goosebumps. But there was no Glass Star visible anywhere.

And then I heard a radio sound from behind.

[Kihihihi, after all that fuss, you’ve already crushed the spare.]

[Fuck, that cowardly cow sneak attacked and broke through the explosive armor and cast illusions and suddenly came in and killed me; what do you want me to do!]

[I'll immediately transmit the illusion countermeasure OS to the main body, so receive it well. Stupid Alex.]

There was a fluorescent green radio attached to what seemed to be the airship's control lever.

I picked it up and looked at it.

[It was really unexpected that you came out of Japan and became active, magical girl of [Beginning].]

"Doctor?"

[Kihihihi, what are you going to do! You've had your name revealed at the first meeting! Foolish Alex!]

[Ah fuck, she died before I could press the airship self-destruct button, how annoying! Fuck!]

[That's why I told you to prepare instead of playing around in the bridge.]

[Fuck, how would I know! Hey you fucking cow, you just wait! I'm going to the main body to blow up that tiny city!]

As most words started with F, it wasn't difficult to understand the shitty English sentences full of slang.

Thud

I threw the completely silent radio to the floor and turned the airship's control lever to the right as much as possible.

The progress route on the monitor showed the airship's expected route changing toward the West Sea. It seemed better to crash it into the sea rather than clumsily land it in northern Gyeonggi, where there are many civilian houses at this point.

Zzzzt

[Eunbit unnie, how did it go?!]

Dorim's avatar appeared toward my avatar, where my consciousness was focused.

"…It seems she received help from a magical girl who can create something like spare bodies. I thought I had killed her for sure, but she spoke through radio from somewhere else."

[Isn't she bluffing?]

Dorim spoke while trying hard to avert her gaze from the horrible flesh pieces spread below.

"I'm not sure either, but she might really have gone to do something to Seoul or done something while attention was focused on the airship."

[I see… are you going to let the airship go to the sea like this?]

Dorim glanced at the monitor, which showed the expected flight route while speaking.

"Yeah, just in case, I think I should leave one avatar here."

[Then let's go back to Seoul now.]

* * *

In the midst of a chaotic situation where air raid sirens were sounding everywhere and citizens were rushing into designated shelters or subways, Park Saebyeok and White Wing unit members were in a corner of Jongno.

"They succeeded in subduing the airship, but that side seems fake… they're already in Seoul or coming."

"I see, so you're saying they're coming to Seoul."

"It seems it will take just under 30 minutes until [Beginning]'s domain is completed."

"Understood."

Park Saebyeok, with her pink short hair tied up, listened to Kang Dorim's avatar's explanation and gathered the waiting White Wing unit members.

Tap tap tap

Just as Park Saebyeok was about to tell the White Wing unit members gathered by platoon about the current situation, a white girl with a rowdy impression appeared smiling on the large electronic display board at the intersection.

[Wow, fucking live broadcast time!]

[Y'all must be working hard living all crowded together in that tiny city!]

[Thinking of that hard work, I've planted a bomb that can clean up about a 5km radius!]

[If you don't want to see everyone blown up and dying, gather in the square in front of me with your Glass Stars!]

[I've brought thousands of muscle guys and bomb chirpers, so you can't escape on foot, so wake up!]

[I'll give you 30 minutes.]

[I'm in a bad mood because I lost an airship.]

In the video, the timer on what looked like a 3-meter cobalt blue bomb started moving.

29:59

Chapter 43 : Where and What to Become

Honk! Honk! Honk!

“Why can’t we go!! Let’s get the car out quickly!!”

“M-mom! I-I’m trying to get out now, but there are too many cars and people so I can’t…”

“Hyeun, it’s Dad… I feel like I haven’t said I love you enough…”

“We’re all going to die at this rate!!!”

Due to the terrorist’s broadcast suddenly announced at Seoul Plaza, all sections of Gangbyeon Expressway were chaos itself.

After the air raid warning, all public transportation was suspended and people who had fled to shelters froze, hugging each other with pale faces.

Citizens in cars rushed to Gangbyeon Expressway, trying to escape Seoul. Dozens of puppet-like creatures the size of 3-meter gorillas blocked vehicles on all bridges into Seoul that people had desperately sought, their fluorescent green eyes glowing.

Bang bang bang bang bang

Ratatatatat!

Forces dispatched from each police station’s strike team, Capital Defense Command, police special forces, and special mission battalions after the state of emergency was declared attacked the puppets blocking the bridges, firing all semi-automatic and automatic weapons, but were blocked by fluorescent green curtains.

They were formidable enemies on bridges that had become too narrow for heavy equipment to enter.

“Helicopter support! Request helicopter support!!”

[It’s difficult because small flying objects are flying around Seoul’s airspace striking all flying objects!!]

“What are you saying!! We’re really all going to die!!! Seoul is going to hell!!!”

[They’re saying they can’t launch because green birds explode like grenades when they see helicopters trying to take off!!!]

Boom!

The soldier firing weapons heard several explosion sounds in the distance and was about to despair due to the malice felt from the slowly approaching gorillas.

[Make way!!]

“K-Kang Dorim?”

“The magical girl of [Cyberbrain]!”

An ash-gray avatar appeared and pushed people aside, and two girls in military uniforms came through.

“We’re from the White Wing unit!”

“Wh…White Wing…?!”

From the perspective of active-duty soldiers, there was a predominant bewildered atmosphere as members of the White Wing unit, who were girls using strange abilities while enjoying cushy jobs in hospitals, arrived on the scene.

“We’ll push them back with psychic power, so please break through with us from the side!”

“B-but…”

[I'm doing this in 30 places right now, so I don't have time to focus only on here!!]

Just as it was difficult to imagine pushing back those gorilla monsters in a situation where even heavy equipment was hard to bring in, ash-gray lasers were fired from behind.

Zap

Guurgh!!

One of the gorilla monsters, boasting a body about 3 meters tall, fell from the pillar it was clinging to as if grabbed by the collar.

Splash

Guooooo!

The soldiers spread a curtain of fire with their weapons against the crazed charging gorilla monsters, and the magical girls gradually broke through the stagnant front line.

'With this…!'

* * *

26:36

The Seoul Plaza where I, who had scattered 3 avatars around, and Park Saebyeok arrived after rushing from Jongno intersection, was filled with a sense of desolation.

A 3-meter structure presumed to be a bomb was writhing with cobalt magical power and fluorescent green magical power. Alex, completely wearing a tactical bag, was waiting there.

"Oh, you came really fast."

Seeing Alex even waving her hand as if welcoming Park Saebyeok and the few White Wing unit members who came along, nausea welled up due to anger.

Alex seemed puzzled that I, who had been in the sky over northern Gyeonggi until just now, was here.

“Why are you here? Did you like meeting in the airship earlier that much?”

“…I’ll kill you for sure this time.”

Park Saebyeok, seeing Alex speaking to me nonchalantly, said without hiding her anger:

“…By whose authority are you saying you’ll kill Seoul citizens?”

“What? Hahaha! You’re a real soldier, it’s fucking hilarious.”

Alex slapped her knees with both hands, laughing at Park Saebyeok’s words, and growled in English as if chewing them up.

“I’ve seen soldiers like you occasionally on battlefields, but didn’t they all die by snipers while pointing fingers?”

A hand playfully wiggling.

“Since you came so quickly, I’ll be super specially nice, so give me your Glass Star and get lost.”

“Who are you taking for a fool…”

Grip

Park Saebyeok quietly said while clenching her fist:

“Your actions were all shown in the file Kang Dorim showed.”

“Hmm?”

“You induce chaos like this and make people terrified, then call out magical girls as sacrifices to the fear and plunder them.”

“Heh?”

“…And you killed them all, don’t try to toy with citizens and my subordinates like that.”

“Pf… kuhuhuk… wow shit, really, you’re really a true soldier.”

Alex laughed humorously and even clapped her hands.

She even clapped toward the camera placed in a corner of the plaza for broadcast, which she had probably stolen from a reporter covering the area.

“Correct!”

[Medical] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Morale Surge

“White Wing unit 1st platoon!!”

“Ack!!”

“Begin combat!!”

“Ack!!”

As Park Saebyeok, wrapped in pink energy all over her body, roared, the eyes of the White Wing unit members also turned pink, and they either took out their unique weapons or rushed toward Alex following Park Saebyeok.

Bang bang bang bang bang bang

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!

The magical girl of [Shooting] fired bullets with her unique weapon, an assault rifle, but they were blocked by the explosive curtain like the one spread on the airship earlier.

“Damn it! Attacks aren’t working!”

“Keep suppressing!”

“We’ll rush in!”

The platoon members specialized in close combat all surrounded and rushed in at once.

Bang!

“Ugh?!”

“It’s dangerous; maintain distance!”

“If we could just do something about that curtain…!”

The attacks of the platoon members trying to engage in hand-to-hand combat also bounced off the explosive curtain with a roar.

I shouted to Park Saebyeok, thinking of how I had attacked the airship:

“The explosive curtain can be penetrated if you break through at once with multiple layers of psychic power!”

“Haap!”

Whoosh!

As soon as Park Saebyeok heard those words, she layered pink energy all over her body and then tackled, stomping the ground hard enough to crack it. She instantly became a pink shell and charged at Alex, and the scene was filled with the sound of the explosive curtain bursting at once and smoke.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Boom!

Alex jumped out using explosive power, breaking through the smoke created where she and Park Saebyeok had collided. Magical power was released from her tactical bag, and dozens of bombs were scattered toward the surrounding White Wing unit members.

Bombs scattered all over the sky of Seoul Plaza.

Click

Click

The ominous sound of detonators activating.

I gathered dozens of scattered bombs with psychic power and threw them as far away as possible.

Rattle!

“Where are you throwing!”

Boom!

Most of the bombs fell to the ground, avoiding the White Wing platoon members. The few bombs that were about to hit directly were protected against as White Wing unit members’ eyes glowed pink, and they protected their own bodies, so there was no major damage.

I aimed illusion magic at Alex, who was floating using explosive power above the dust cloud.

[Deception] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Dream World

Perception Acceleration

Snap!

Alex stopped.

“Ugh?!”

“Now!!!”

Park Saebyeok charged with a roar toward Alex, who was falling.

Park Saebyeok’s fist, flying as a pink flash, was filled with thick killing intent and will. As her fist approached Alex’s body, leaving a heavy shockwave…

Beep

[Alex, it’s perception exchange.]

As a fluorescent green pigeon that had flown in from somewhere

flashed its eyes, Alex's stiffened body moved, and the pigeon fell, choking on its breath.

Alex reacted to Park Saebyeok's attack, aiming directly for her heart, her eyes glistening.

Fists meeting each other.

"Uwaaaaaah!"

"Fuck off!"

Alex met Park Saebyeok's fist head-on while making a huge explosion sound.

Boom!

Park Saebyeok bounced back due to the repulsive force of the explosion.

"Motherfucker, almost died again!"

"Damn it!"

I cast illusion magic on Alex once again in between.

[Deception] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Dream World

As signs of the illusion unfolding appeared, Alex requested rescue from Doctor without hesitation.

"Doctor!! I'm blind!!"

[Kihihihi]

Beep

A puppet collapsing.

Having regained her sight, Alex lit up her tactical bag and scattered dozens of bombs randomly.

Clink

Boom!!

Park Saebyeok charged in endlessly glowing with pink energy, regardless of the explosions filling her vision. And beside her, attacks from White Wing platoon members with pink glowing eyes continued.

Park Saebyeok bouncing back again due to the repulsive force of the explosion.

Boom!

“Uaaaaaaah!!!”

“It’s useless, you idiots!!”

The White Wing platoon’s attacks bouncing off the explosive curtain.

“Please!! Hit!!”

Bang bang bang bang

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!

Alex seemed to not need to pay attention to me if she just took care of the illusions, as she wrapped explosive curtains around her fists and pounded the platoon members, eliminating them one by one.

Bang!

“Kuhack?!”

“That’s three down!”

White Wing platoon members were knocked down with tremendous explosion sounds with each punch.

Boom!!

“Five! Six!”

“Kyaaa!!”

“Kugh…?!”

Amidst the scene of them being reduced one by one, covered in black smoke, only Park Saebyeok was persistently keeping Alex in check.

Park Saebyeok, completely enraged at the sight of her 1st platoon members being taken down one by one, charged in with pink energy overflowing, screaming.

A tattered body.

And a strike with all her might.

“I will!!! Kill you!!!”

“Try it, idiot!!”

Park Saebyeok threw a punch, squeezing out all her remaining energy, but she missed because she couldn’t correct her trajectory, which was distorted by the explosive curtain.

Bang!

“Damn it!!”

If I could just use large-scale barrier magic, there were many methods I could think of, but I couldn’t due to the domain declaration draining magic in real-time.

Perception and illusion magic were holding out as green birds popping out from somewhere exchanged perceptions.

‘Damn it…’

It’s always like this.

The fight at the port.

The fight in Kabukicho.

When something gets blocked, I just rely on my companions.

It's pathetic how I have deluded myself for the past two years into thinking that I can survive with only barrier magic and illusion magic.

Endless explosion sounds rang in my ears.

After each explosion sound passed, without fail, one 1st platoon member was down.

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

In the midst of the huge roars, I saw dizzily all the tasks my avatars were performing.

Declaring the domain.

Controlling the airship.

Protecting Oh Sanghyuk.

Shooting down puppets.

My head was foggy from performing all of this.

Should I rush in now and engage in hand-to-hand combat together with Park Saebyeok?

If I don't stop this now…

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

A question flashed through my foggy mind.

Is the way the magical girl of [Deception] fights truly casting illusions and engaging in hand-to-hand combat using output while

aiming for openings?

The ability of [Deception] that I had thought of as a lone illusionist because it didn't appear in the original work.

-Don't use your ability during practice! Leader! I'll die!

Suddenly, I recalled Ichika's voice pleading every time we did combat training.

Is what the combat analysis ability possessed by the magical girl of [Freedom] was wary of really illusions and perception manipulation?

'No, if it's Ichika, she'd close her eyes, dodge illusions, and overcome perception with her fighting instinct.'

By then, the fight was already tilting toward Alex's victory.

"It's over now, you son of a bitch!"

"Ugh…"

Boom

Park Saebyeok, who had been holding out alone among the White Wing unit members who had fallen one by one due to explosions, was finally hit directly by the rushing explosive fist and bounced back.

Whoosh…

Park Saebyeok's military uniform top had long since been torn, and the black shirt worn underneath was also in tatters. The wounds visible through the gaps were being healed, overflowing with pink energy.

But the eyes visible through her pink hair, wet with sweat and blood and drooping, were burning.

"Not yet… it's not over yet!"

"Ha, this true soldier bitch is disgustingly tenacious."

I suddenly aimed my hand at Alex just before snapping my fingers.

The magical girl of [Speed] makes her own body fast and automatically protects it so it doesn't break down even at transcendent speeds.

The magical girl of [Freedom] analyzes and strengthens the best conditions for victory in the struggle for freedom and leads battles to victory.

The magical girl of [Protection] creates numerous swords within a space to protect what she has decided to protect, turning it into a fortress guarded by numerous soldiers.

[Nursing], [Order], [Fairytale], [Baking], [Book Lover], [Reporting], [Gourmet], [Silver Wheel], [Machine Gun], [Armor], [Sprint], [Cyberbrain], [Medical], [Gliding]…

Girls who have reached their dreams and fate set them as aliases and bloom as abilities.

I remember watching the original work and feeling frustrated about why they stubbornly reveal all their abilities, as not a single magical girl who deceives about her own alias appeared.

That's why I myself impersonated [Beginning] as the magical girl of [Deception].

But only at this moment of crisis, when everything I had prepared was blocked, and people were in danger.

I heard my colorless star whispering that it was a much more amazing thing than I thought.

It deceives a person's sense of the present.

It shows the dream a person has harbored in their heart as an illusion.

Dream Fantasy

The star whispers how futile and funny it is to just consciously 'deceive' when the boundary between dream and reality is ambiguous.

In the first place, the world viewed by creatures with cognitive abilities is full of fleeting illusions.

The star cries out as if frustrated; what on earth are you showing while persuading one by one.

Cognition

People see with their eyes, feel with their senses, and experience reality.

Human history is the history of cognition.

We call it cause and effect.

Our world is made up of cause and effect.

Deceive.

‘Deceive.’

“Deceive… the past.”

I am not the magical girl of [Illusion].

“Deceive… the past.”

The scene of Alex standing on top of Park Saebyeok, raising her hand just before striking down, replays in slow motion. But I don’t feel a sense of crisis.

Because this current scene is also cause and effect created by the reality we perceive.

“Cause and effect… reversal…”

I feel the star gently looking at the single thought that arose in a situation where I’m pouring out all my senses and strength.

I had the ability to deceive the world.

I just hadn’t realized it myself.

[Deception] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Cause and Effect Reversal

Nothing happened for the past 5 minutes.

Only the cause and effect of these fleeting beings with cognition was distorted-

"Cough…?!"

Alex was lying down with wide eyes.

Pieces of internal organs and blood suddenly poured out of her mouth, and she flailed her legs in panic.

"Guhuk, ugh, uweeek… Do-Doctor!!! Illu-sion!!! Change perception!!!"

[…Alex, that's not an illusion.]

"Th-this?!"

Park Saebyeok was not helplessly lying down like before but standing proudly with her fist raised high, pink energy overflowing.

<Park Saebyeok's strike with all her might critically hit Alex's abdomen, breaking through the explosive curtain.>

<Severe ruptures occurred in Alex's stomach and intestines, and her lungs are in a state difficult to breathe.>

A possibility that may have existed in this world.

A possibility that had already been observed and disappeared.

I summoned it.

Chapter 44 : Where and What to Become

“Kuhup, huh, hee… heal.”

Alex, who had never lost her composure, healed her completely crushed abdomen with an anxious voice, but she breathed roughly as if she didn’t have the luxury to heal her lungs.

Alex, who staggered to her feet, looked up at the sky and shouted.

“Re-retreat!! Doctor!! Put me back in my new body!! Shit, I’m really going to die at this rate!!”

[I told you not to go, stupid Alex.]

“Stop talking shit and do it quickly!!”

Beep

A fluorescent green hawk flew in from beyond the sky, and fluorescent green light unfolded all over Alex’s body. Then Alex threw the cobalt blue Glass Star that suddenly appeared in her hand to the hawk puppet.

The hawk puppet caught it and tried to fly far away in an instant.

Bang

The magical girl of [Shooting], the 1st platoon leader who had fainted, saw this and fired using her unique weapon but missed.

[Kihihihi, it was dangerous but somehow well…]

And the cobalt blue Glass Star came into my hand with a snap.

＜Because the hawk puppet was shot and fell by a White Wing unit member who had regained consciousness, and I caught it with my hand.＞

“Sh-shit!! What is this!! What the hell!!”

Alex shouted in dismay as her last desperate means of escape was blocked and her Glass Star was stolen.

[…I don’t know what the principle is, but how about this magical girl of [Beginning]!!]

Doctor’s voice passed by and the ground shook as dozens of puppets appeared from all around and rushed at full speed.

Guwooo!!

Beep

Whoosh

Dozens of puppets all rushed at me from far away.

Alex took out all the bombs she could from her tactical bag with all her might and threw them at the White Wing unit members who were falling or getting up.

“Eat this!!”

“No!!”

Park Saebyeok saw this and cast psychic power toward the bombs in shock, but because it was so sudden, she couldn’t aim properly, and the bombs were thrown accurately toward the White Wing unit members.

Crack

Dozens of 3-meter giant gorillas all rushed in at once, forcibly twisted my hand to recover the Glass Star, and one hawk rushed in at full speed and crashed into my body.

Bang

Bang

Bang

“Kyaa?!”

“Ugh…!”

The area became a dust pit after the explosion engulfed the White Wing unit members, and when the dust cleared, all dozens of puppets were crushed.

Park Saebyeok ran toward her unit members but was confused to see them all fine.

＜Because Park Saebyeok used miraculous control to deflect the bombs in the direction the puppets were coming from, and the puppets were all annihilated by them.＞

“What the fuck kind of ability is this!!!”

[Deception] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Cause and Effect Reversal

Cause and effect are bound together as one and called causality.

It becomes one karma and becomes numerous links connecting all things.

I can untie one of those karmic links and summon a different result that could occur from the same cause to overlay it.

I reconstruct by changing one link that has been observed and become karma.

5 minutes.

If it’s something that happened within just 5 minutes, I can deceive even the observed results of the world connected by causality.

I reverse and overlay causality that disappeared as a momentary dream pushed by the waves of possibility.

For the first time, I felt connected to the world at a moment other than domain declaration.

Why other born 3-star magical girls wielded such powerful forces.

That my understanding of the concept called my [Deception] was fundamentally wrong.

That deceiving someone as a magical girl is not about showing illusions and dreams to persuade but about using the laws themselves.

That even while seeing girls using unreasonable miracles, I alone tried to live in a world of reason, so I couldn't properly use the ability given to me.

I realized it now.

Tap

Tap

I walked toward Alex, understanding this.

"Hahaha, huhahaha! Do you think I'll give up like this, fuck!!"

Alex limped and dropped dozens of bombs on me.

<But the bombs she aimed wrong due to the pain felt in her lungs all went over behind me.>

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

Seeing all the bombs miss completely that should have hit even with eyes closed at this distance, Alex screamed.

“Huaaa! Uaaaa!!!”

Terrified by the unreasonable violence of causality, Alex rushed in with explosive curtains wrapped around both hands, squeezing out all her magical power.

＜Meanwhile, she fell due to the shock caused by the wound in her internal organs that she hadn’t managed to heal reopening.＞

“Ugh! Huh!! Aaagh…!!”

Alex’s pants were soaked with blood from her ruptured organs as she writhed in extreme pain, and as all the pains in her body that she had forgotten due to adrenaline rushed in, she looked at me with eyes full of shock while making deflated breathing sounds.

“Shit… wh-what are you?! Fuck… you’re not doing a fucking thing… why the fuck… is this happening?!”

“…”

“Fuck, say something!!”

I looked at the cobalt blue Glass Star in my hand.

Two large lights.

The dark red third light between them emitted an ominous light like blood vessels throughout the entire Glass Star.

100 people.

The dreams and lives of 100 people are sleeping here.

What might have been another one.

What might have been another Ichika.

What might have been another Dorim.

The fleeting dreams of such girls that were lost.

‘I’ve ended up needing to visit [Death]’s domain.’

Save this world from meaningless fighting from [War]. And persuade [Death] to entrust the souls of girls who had to die unjustly.

If it's [Death] who didn't refuse the request of those who came to the land at the northern end carrying the Glass Stars of girls killed by [War] even in the original work.

The souls of girls that should have originally melted into the world's cycle of reincarnation after death still exist here in some form, because they had to exist somehow while <Magical Girl HAZARD> continued.

'Mother.'

Thinking of the families who must have been devastated losing these girls, memories of my mother came to mind.

Grip

I looked at Alex lying down, feeling a new weight on my shoulders. And I declared in a small voice so only Alex could hear.

"…I swear."

"Wh-what…?"

"By my past life name … and my current alias, magical girl of [Deception]."

[Deception] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Dream World

Perception Acceleration

"You cannot be revived in any domain."

Crunch

I didn't turn my eyes away from the moment Alex died, feeling her head being crushed in the eternally extended perception of time.

The pain, despair, fear, resignation… and a very slight comfort

etched on her slowly crumbling face.

The world full of explosive sounds of the girl who had stolen and killed the dreams of countless magical girls ended here.

The voice of the one called Doctor, which had been heard throughout the fight, also stopped being heard at some point, so Seoul Plaza was again filled with silence.

"…"

"Is it… over?"

Park Saebyeok, who had returned after healing the fallen White Wing unit members, completely removed her tattered black T-shirt and limped over here.

Clink

Her dog tags made a sound as they bounced against her body, with muscles clearly defined.

'Captain Korea…'

It was dazzling due to the pink energy rising like smoke from her starkly visible wounds.

'She used healing magic on her unit members but is enduring with natural healing ability for herself.'

I nodded, not having the energy to answer.

"I see, but there's still the bomb…"

17:29

17:28

17:27

Even after completely eliminating Alex and the one called Doctor falling silent, the bomb's clock was mercilessly ticking away.

I tried touching it a few times with cause and effect reversal, but I couldn't touch the causality engraved on the bomb because it had continued from days ago.

[The bridge areas have been cleared and citizens are evacuating!]

Zzzzt

Dorim's avatar appeared and looked around the situation.

Alex's corpse, White Wing unit members who had fainted or collapsed from exhaustion, me and Park Saebyeok standing.

[…You won.]

"But the bomb still hasn't been resolved."

"What should we do with a bomb that will blow up a 5 kilometer radius in 17 minutes…?"

"Throw it in the Han River?"

[The Han River is about 1 kilometer wide, so it's dangerous.]

"High-powered bombs are more dangerous when detonated underwater."

"Moving it by helicopter… would kill the pilot…"

[We can't even launch one because of the hawk and pigeon puppets still roaming nearby airspace.]

"Carrying it to Incheon sea with psychic power?"

[Even calculating the shortest distance, we'd need to go at least 60 kilometers for there to be no damage.]

From my experience moving things here and there in Japan for the past two years, preparing for the apocalypse, it was impossible to fly at 240 kilometers per hour even at maximum speed.

"Would it be difficult to evacuate as much as possible within the damage radius?"

I saw reporters gradually approaching to cover us after confirming safety and soldiers rushing in to grasp the situation.

[It's impossible, the 5 kilometer radius includes Jongno, Seongbuk, Dongdaemun, Seodaemun, Yongsan, Mapo.]

"Damn it… if we could just get rid of that…!"

It was bleak.

Park Saebyeok was anxiously biting her lower lip, and Kang Dorim was quietly looking at the bomb, thinking of something.

"Captain Park Saebyeok!! What's the situation!!"

"Miss Kang Eunseol! Is Seoul safe now?!"

"[Beginning]!? Is it true that [Beginning] is preparing for domain declaration!?"

Rumble

Click

Click

The group of reporters who instantly surrounded us and asked questions flinched upon seeing Alex's corpse but continued to pour out questions regardless.

"Shut up!! The operation situation isn't over yet, so stay quietly in the shelter!!"

Park Saebyeok shouted with her eyes glowing pink, and the reporters retreated hesitantly at her momentum.

Dorim's murmur echoed in the quietened scene.

[Maybe… it could be resolved if we go just 30 kilometers.]

"How?!"

Kang Dorim quietly looked up at the sky.

[If we detonate it 30 kilometers up in the sky, there will be almost no damage… if it's similar in nature to the bombs the magical girl of bombing was throwing, there won't be damage from electromagnetic pulse either.]

"I'll do it! If I just stop the domain declaration, I can definitely do it!"

If I just stop the domain declaration I'm currently doing and focus all my magical power on psychic power… a speed of 120km/h would be doable.

But Kang Dorim shook her head.

[We don't know when they'll attack again, so we have to do it now if we don't do it now, Eun… unnie just keep doing what you were doing.]

"Then what are you going to do!"

Park Saebyeok shouted in frustration.

[I can go anywhere if there are radio waves.]

Zzzzt!

With ash-gray noise incomparably larger than before, Kang Dorim's main body, not her avatar, was standing in front of the bomb.

"My cyberbrain swimming doesn't use magical power to move to places with radio waves, I can easily move one bomb."

"…Dorim, you?"

"Hm?"

"If you do that, will you really be okay?"

"…"

A female reporter who had hesitated due to our serious atmosphere asked tremblingly.

"Se-Seoul is… is it really okay…?"

15:46

15:45

15:44

Checking the gradually decreasing timer, the reporters intuitively felt that something was wrong, that this situation wouldn't end just with the terrorist's death.

Seeing this, Kang Dorim spoke in front of the public for the first time with a bright smile.

"Of course! Magical girls exist to protect everyone!"

Whoosh!

"Dorim!!"

"Kang Dorim!!"

Despite my and Park Saebyeok's cries, Kang Dorim flew into the sky holding the bomb, leaving a trail of ash-gray energy.

Chapter 45 : Becoming a Shining Star

There are things that become clearer in the world of 0s and 1s.

Parents' hearts.

Adults' movements.

The flow of public opinion.

When they have substance, they're incredibly complex.

But if you convert everything to points and draw a picture, a clear image emerges.

Dorim realized this at a very young age in her corner of the room.

Her parents' divorce when she was young was just two immature people failing to love each other.

The adults who tried to use her were just restless due to their own goals.

The fickleness of ever-changing public opinion was just countless people's words flowing in like waves.

To the girl who could now see the world broadly, this world didn't look too bad.

Whoosh—

The sound of wind brushing her ears pounded her eardrums, and at some point, she couldn't hear anything.

"Huu…"

Dorim briefly took in the sight of Jongno, who now looked smaller than her palm, and then raised her gaze again. And she slowly rose into the sky with both hands spread, carrying the bomb.

0101010100101010101…

What she felt swimming through the sea of data with cyberbrain swimming was the emotions of countless people.

One small money transfer.

There, she felt a father's heart worrying his son might be going hungry.

An order history for one cheap suit set.

There, she felt a female college student's determination preparing for tomorrow's challenge.

A hastily booked plane ticket from Jeju Island on university interview day.

There, she felt the excitement of a high school student on the verge of success.

The post history of one ID on a community site that had decreased from some day.

There, she felt the joy of a man who had succeeded in finding another interesting topic.

0101100101010010101010…

This world drawn in points was definitely not hell.

In this world, there was beauty in various and fascinating emotions boiling up and spreading in an instant.

At least, that's what Dorim thought.

Whoosh—

The color of the sky surrounding her was gradually darkening.

Beyond the bomb, the other side looked like an endless darkness close to navy blue.

Her fingertips were freezing, and her breath, barely held with psychic power, was becoming rough.

“Huh… huu…”

Dorim looked down again.

There was the place where she was born, grew up, saw, felt, and loved.

That sight felt so beautiful that Dorim cried.

[Dorim! It’s dangerous! Come down!!]

She felt an email from Sanghyuk coming to the contact address she had left open for the Executive Director of the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team.

The mister seemed to have somehow escaped from there and urgently seen the news about Dorim.

“Hehe… mister… your head… was getting pretty empty…”

Sanghyuk, who couldn’t continue his married life with his wife’s legacy.

From the moment he met Dorim, who had run away from her parents’ fight, in the apartment park on the day he stamped the divorce papers, he volunteered to be Dorim’s friend.

The middle-aged man who had weathered life’s storms became a surprisingly excellent friend to the child with too high a mental age.

‘Let’s not hate people.’

His heart was filled with worry that the smart Dorim might look at this world and despise it.

‘Let’s live liking people.’

“Mister, I’ve never… not even once hated people.”

Dorim conveyed her sincere feelings that Sanghyuk couldn’t hear.

“Because, it’s this beautiful.”

Crack

Dorim’s unique weapon, the VR goggles, couldn’t withstand the lack of magical power and broke.

Since they were originally a lump of magical power, the goggles completely shattered once they lost their form.

Clink

Clink

Dorim’s face, shaking off the shattered goggles, was smiling.

Just knowing that someone remembers you can give you strength.

[Dorim, Mom is sorry!! Come back quickly!!]

[Dorim! I was wrong! Dad was wrong!!]

Ah.

That’s a relief.

“I didn’t particularly hate you. I just hope you find new love and live well.”

Dorim, smiling broadly, forgave her parents, who at least hadn’t completely forgotten her.

They, too, were immature adults living just one life, and Dorim herself was just an immature girl.

…She decided to think that way.

—!

Even the muffled wind sound that had been hitting her ears disappeared, and only a cold silence was felt in the sky.

One breath turned to ice, making her lungs cold.

Her two hands holding the bomb were already numb, sensation gone.

“Huh… hup… huu…”

She had left even the clouds below her feet; now all she felt was endless darkness.

Darkness…

“Huu… hup…”

Dizzy.

Dorim, who almost lost consciousness in the darkness for a moment, gritted her teeth.

“Not yet… not yet…!”

[Dorim! Are you really okay?]

[Dorim! Thank you for always protecting us!]

[Magical girl of Cyberbrain, fighting!! You must come back!!]

[Strongest middle school student Kang Eunseol!]

[Korea’s strongest magical girl!]

“Ha… haha…!”

The girls… the unnies who came and went to the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Headquarters.

She thought she had just quietly done her own work while keeping her distance because it was difficult to get along with them, who seemed to enjoy themselves without thinking.

But they had always been cheering for what Dorim was doing.

“Now… Eunbit unnie will protect them well…”

As long as they’ve entered [Beginning]’s domain, at least as far as Dorim knows, the kindest, most foolish, and purest king will protect them.

01011000111010101011010101011O…

[Is this email going to Miss Kang Eunseol?]

[Thank you, magical girl!]

[I’m cheering for you while watching the news now!]

[Thanks to you, I was able to open a store safely with my son without being scammed. Thank you so much!]

[You’re coming back, right? Right? What are we supposed to do without the magical girl of [Cyberbrain] in Korea!]

[I’m cheering for you while watching the news at home now!!]

[It would feel too gloomy in Korea without Dorim!! Come back!!]

0101010100111001110101011010101…

[I’ll send a few fruit baskets to the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Headquarters when work is over! You must come!]

[I’ve made beef bone soup, you must come eat it.]

[Thank you, Kang Eunseol!]

[Dorim is such a cute name; why are you changing it~ You must come back safely!]

[Eunseol unnie, please come back safely!]

[It’s a big deal now; you’re the only magical girl in the world who stopped a terrorist attack!]

[Crying while watching the news… thank you, magical girl! For protecting us!!]

[I’m proud that Dorim is the most amazing magical girl after Beginning!]

10101001101010111010100010101010101…

Look.

Don’t their hearts contain a warmth that can’t be changed into a single point?

Dorim found it lovable.

Dorim was proud of it.

Zzzzt

Zzzzt

Had she reached her limit?

Ash-gray noise occurred all over Dorim’s body, and her strength rapidly drained.

“Ugh… huu…!”

Let’s hang in there.

“Uaa… uaaaaaaaa!!!”

Dorim mustered her strength to protect the people cheering for her and whom she cheered for.

00:57

00:56

00:55

As far as possible, as fast as possible.

The current speed wasn’t enough.

Farther and faster.

So that no one would get hurt and could greet tomorrow with a smile…!

If someone asked Dorim why she was going this far, she would answer like this:

“Because… I’m a magical girl…!”

Because I’m a magical girl who wants to love and protect everyone!

Woong

She felt her Glass Star vibrating greatly.

She felt countless people seeing her as a single point rising into the sky and feeling hope.

Hundreds of millions of hearts were connected to her, cheering her on.

The world.

The world the girl loved was now answering.

Dorim’s bloomed magical girl outfit, the loose T-shirt, was covered in dazzling light.

No longer anxiously preparing for the future alone.

For a magical girl who loves the world and connects the hope of tens of millions as one.

She needs an outfit befitting that.

01010110101010010110101010110001101…

The stickers densely attached to the T-shirt scattered as pieces of magical power, becoming a large ribbon wrapping around her waist.

Above the silver ribbon, the wishes and hopes of countless people still being endlessly sent were floating as 0s and 1s.

Glass slippers formed on her small bare feet along with a gentle light.

Her tangled and messy ash-gray hair straightened out, and silver light rose.

When the dazzling light that had covered Dorim's entire body cleared, scattering ash-gray crystals.

A magical girl was wearing a silver dress.

Fully bloomed 3-star magical girl of [Cyberbrain]

Kang Dorim

The girl who loved the world amidst the wishes and hopes of countless people truly bloomed her shining third star.

[Dorim!! Now!!]

Eunbit's voice was faintly heard.

The domain was completed.

"If it's now…!"

Dorim felt the faint domain that she normally couldn't have grasped resonating with her third star and permeating.

Dorim raised her spread hands.

[Cyberbrain] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Cyberbrain World

"Farther! Completely out!"

Dorim shouted while gathering magical power in both hands.

"So that people won't get hurt!!"

The ash-gray magical power was intertwined with silver threads and spread out hugely while giving form to people's hopes that had turned into 0s and 1s.

Some magical power became giant heavy equipment and pushed the

bomb away

Some magical power became virtual heroes and pushed the bomb away

Some magical power became Dorim's form and pushed the bomb away

The virtual world containing people's hearts became reality, pushing away the madman's malice.

Hope mixed with ash-gray and silver materialized, opening a huge ballroom in the dark universe.

Ominous magical power spewed from the bomb that had advanced far away, pushed by an incomparable mass to anything so far.

00:00

Flash.

Booooooom!

Even in the face of the violence of enormous light and energy, the Cinderella of the virtual world was smiling.

Even if the ball ended, she could return leisurely.

To the world she loves.

Chapter 46 : Change #5

October 27th

The weather, which had been quite chilly until yesterday, cleared up as if it were a lie and returned to a relatively warm temperature.

Actually, although it's been almost 3 years since I changed into this body, it's still hard to get used to the gazes that all converge on my chest area when I wear even slightly thinner clothes, so I felt more comfortable in slightly chilly weather. Because when I covered up with thick sweaters or knits, the gazes reduced by at least 50%.

Ding

I've tried almost all the restaurants around the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Headquarters during the 2 weeks since the incident, but in the end, this beef bone soup restaurant was the only place I liked, so I came here again.

Inside the beef bone soup restaurant, it was a bit crowded with people, but there were still some seats left.

Some people glanced at me with my noticeable appearance, then nodded and gave a thumbs up when they saw the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team affiliation logo on my nameplate.

I also gave a thumbs up in response.

The public opinion about magical girls in Korea, which had been favorable before, was now explosive beyond enthusiasm.

"One regular beef bone soup, please~"

"Student Dorim didn't come today?"

I quietly pointed to the sky at the restaurant owner's words.

“She seems busy because of the launching ceremony.”

“Ah~”

I took off the knit I had been regretting wearing since leaving my lodgings because it was too hot, hung it on the chair, sat down properly, and watched the TV in the beef bone soup restaurant. After acting as a civil servant (fake) for a whole month, walking around Sejong City at lunchtime in a suit skirt with a nameplate dangling, I was reaching the point where a suit felt more comfortable than casual clothes.

‘Last weekend when I went to the movies with Dorim wearing a suit, she looked at me with strange eyes…’

Because the soul of a 27-year-old shy and lonely mister still lives inside me, the cold eyes of an active middle school student felt like too great a wound.

[As the launching ceremony of the Asian Supernatural Ability Alliance is scheduled, now respecting the autonomy of magical girls…]

[President Yang said that since this terrorist incident, the contribution of magical girls to society…]

On the screen appeared a photo of President Yang shaking hands with Team Leader Oh Sanghyuk, sweating slightly and pulling up the corners of his mouth to make an artificial smile, while Sanghyuk looked at him with cold eyes and a crooked smile.

The crisis of Seoul’s extinction.

Because that was a crisis equivalent to being stabbed in the heart for Korea and meant the end of the nation, the impact left by the incident that lasted just over an hour was enormous.

[Seoul Invasion, Crisis of Korea’s Destruction!]

[Tragedy Caused by a Single Terrorist!]

The military was powerless, the state was paralyzed, and the rulers

hid.

If the situation had lasted a little longer, there might have been a ruler who would have awakened the latent courage and leadership in their unconscious and risen up. But at least at the moment when the villain magical girl invaded, citizens were paralyzed with helpless fear, seeing examples of other countries that had been hit first.

There, the girls stood and fought.

[Captain Park Saebyeok “No special treatment, I just did what was natural”]

[All White Wing unit members “We express gratitude to the military, police, and citizens who fought together.”]

[Miracle Han River Escape Operation, All White Wing unit members to be awarded medals.]

[Special law under discussion for smooth social service activities of supernatural ability users.]

[Proposal of ‘Park Saebyeok Special Law’ allowing activity based on ability alone, regardless of age and status of supernatural ability users.]

To someone who didn’t know about my cause and effect reversal, Park Saebyeok’s desperate activity, which was almost at the level of taking down [Bombing] single-handedly, was recorded by the camera in Seoul Plaza and was being treated as a legendary hero.

Especially in cases like the European Union, which had suffered great damage from [Bombing], they even sent a letter to the Ministry of National Defense to invite Captain Park Saebyeok to the joint memorial service for victims to be held next week.

‘That Minister Jang Iksu, he couldn’t say a word because Dorim and I knew everything.’

Of course, from the perspective of the ministers, members of parliament, and the president who were in the bunker, these were discussions that could be had because it was an incident equivalent to

a terrorist attack occurring in a nearby country.

‘That one hour changed everything.’

The moment one question was raised in a current affairs talk show about why the emergency countermeasures committee, including the president, was not convened and why the control tower, except for the working-level officials in charge of Seoul’s defense, did not show up during the one-hour crisis of Seoul’s extinction.

The space-time in the studio froze.

‘…’

‘…’

Along with the chilling silence, recalling numerous historical cases, the question ‘Could it be…?’ arose in the minds of all Seoul citizens.

To calm all Korean citizens who were quietly sharing that chilling silence and slowly turning their heads toward the Blue House and Yeouido, high-ranking public officials related to national security all praised the achievements of Korean magical girls as if sparks had fallen on them.

“Isn’t it really amazing!!”

“They are the pride of the country!!”

Kang Dorim, who single-handedly stopped a bomb of tremendous power that made buildings near Seoul City Hall collapse even though it exploded in the sky completely outside the 5-kilometer blast radius.

Park Saebyeok, who stopped the magical girl of [Bombing], the vicious terrorist who had caused thousands of casualties and whom the European Union couldn’t even touch, with her two fists.

The girls who had been the pride of the nation, shining with achievements of treating critically ill patients and dramatically lowering all crime rates via the internet, rose to the rank of heroes with this incident.

Ironically, the girls they had tried to put into the state system instead created an opportunity to actively go outside the state system, using public opinion as support.

-Mister, are you just going to let this go?

-Now we're the ones holding the leash.

-If we reveal that you tried to deal with the two of us and send Park Saebyeok to America, it's completely over, right?

-If it starts to feel like a rope instead of a leash, they might really struggle, we need tomorrow.

Silence.

The Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team gained justification and freedom at the cost of silence.

'In the first place, they can't ignore us because of Dorim's current position.'

There were also media outlets that started to present hard-line arguments saying that if it weren't for magical girls, this wouldn't have happened, but they couldn't have much influence due to the defense of those who had benefited from the achievements Park Saebyeok and Kang Dorim had built up before.

America's reaction was surprisingly moderate.

[We express gratitude to our ally Korea for stopping the terrorist who caused the tragedy across Europe.]

As they were aiming for a windfall by just launching one transport plane from the beginning, they changed their line to maintain silence in accordance with the changed situation.

Russia had not shown any action since the day of the incident and was taking an extremely closed stance, still maintaining silence.

Meanwhile, to summarize the attitude of China, where the magical girl of [Sword] is presumed to have completely left after checking the

girls who escaped into the domain after overcoming the moment of crisis…

“[Beginning], please stop paying attention to us now.”

“Okay…”

“…Does that mean you’re not interested in the safety of China’s magical girls?”

“Huh?”

“Why don’t you understand our feelings!”

“…”

…After a series of questions full of all sorts of modifiers, diplomatic rhetoric, and tedious justifications, they put forward demands not for the removal of the domain, but for ‘establish a self-governing body run only by our own people like Korea.’

The world was gradually focusing on the domain in East Asia where magical girls, who had become even rarer human resources due to the rampage of the Scavengers that instantly reduced the number of magical girls by close to 10% of the total, could be safe.

[Existing state systems are powerless in the fight of supernatural ability users!]

This was a fact realized from the commotion that had occurred over several days.

Because the scene of a single magical girl miserably neutralizing the state system came as an unforgettable shock.

[Magical girls are safe in magical girls’ society.]

This concept, completely rejecting the existing social order, was forcibly injected into people all over the world.

If there’s one thing that’s a problem, it’s that the owner of that domain is known to the outside world as ‘me’, a Japanese person, but

even that now…

Slurp

I finished the beef bone soup seasoned with radish kimchi juice and was about to leave the restaurant.

“Oh right, Miss Eunbit!”

“Yes?”

The kind-hearted grandmother who was the owner of the beef bone soup restaurant urgently called me as I approached to pay.

“This is packed, please give it to student Dorim to eat.”

It was beef bone soup with wheat flour noodles, radish kimchi, and warm rice carefully packed in a thermal lunchbox.

“Last time when student Dorim took the bomb, I texted her to come eat beef bone soup safely no matter what.”

“Ah… Dorim’s been too busy lately…”

“Hoho, that’s why I bought an expensive lunchbox with a big heart so she could eat when she’s hungry.”

“Ah, then I’ll pay for one more serving.”

A wrinkled hand gently stopped my hand as I was about to take out my wallet.

“My son works in Jongno~”

“…”

“He said he went around places like nursing homes as a social worker, unable to evacuate when the incident happened last time.”

“Is… that so.”

“Can you tell student Dorim thank you?”

Squeeze

“Really… really thank you…”

“Yes, I’ll definitely tell her.”

The beef bone soup restaurant owner smiled brightly and then went back into the kitchen.

“If you bring that lunchbox, I’ll always fill it with our house beef bone soup for free!”

“Yes, thank you.”

Ding

The sky was clear when I came out after finishing my meal.

The silver and ash-gray of the castle boasting its presence above the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Headquarters building was also very visible.

“Dorim unnie~ Let me ride the flying airplane again~”

“Ah, again? At this rate, I’ll bankrupt all the amusement parks in the country.”

Dorim’s avatar in a shining silver dress clapped her hands.

Clap!

Numerous 0s and 1s appeared in the air and created a silver airplane that one child could ride. The airplane floated about 1 meter in the air and flew leisurely.

“Wow! Dorim unnie! Thank you!”

Whoosh

“Hey! You should only ride it inside the playground! And my name is Eunseol now!!”

I approached Dorim’s avatar waving her hands and patted her head.

“It’s still amazing, that wide-area summoned avatars and summons have substance.”

It felt so amazing that a magical girl from a completely different domain was using unlimited substantial summoning and avatars that were allowed only to [War] based on the original work. Although they can’t be compared in terms of destructive power and physical force.

“Hm? Did Eunbit unnie eat beef bone soup?”

I felt good that Dorim’s hair, which had been fluffy like a stray dog, was now really shimmering silver like a princess.

“Beef bone soup, the owner gave it for free saying thank you.”

“Ah~ I hadn’t eaten yet.”

“Are you very busy?”

“Yeah, because some faceless king living somewhere threw her crown and ran away.”

Fully bloomed 3-star who bloomed with a dream.

Because it was a realm pioneered only by the protagonist Shikishima Yuki in the original work, there was one role I didn’t know about.

One who connects the world.

Dorim was recognized as qualified to receive part of the domain as a fief and was able to operate it by receiving a transfer of part of my domain.

The Korean domain that changed like that no longer had the glass-colored light of my unique magical power, but had a color of ash-gray tinged with silver.

However, since it could be transferred like a vassal of a born 3-star, it was still my domain if you had to specify.

“Let’s just announce that it’s Dorim’s land because it’s annoying.”

For various reasons, Korea was known to the outside world not as [Beginning]'s domain but as [Cyberbrain]'s domain.

I roughly informed Sumire about this matter, and Sumire seemed to have understood in her own way, saying something about feudal rule.

'Honestly, Sumire's old-fashioned vocabulary is still burdensome.'

Dorim's avatar poked me and said.

"So now you can declare domains in other places?"

"Yeah, it seems the structure was that if you transfer a domain to someone, you can expand your domain by that much again."

"What is this, Three Kingdoms? The domain expands if you farm talents?"

"Because not just anyone can become a fully bloomed 3-star."

"Anyway, come to the castle, I'm hungry!"

I answered loudly, bending my waist completely in a playful manner.

"Yes! 'Silver Princess'!"

"Oh really! You're the 'Faceless King' yourself!"

We walked down the street for a while, exchanging cringeworthy nicknames given to each other.

Here and there on the streets, Dorim's other avatars were flying around, grumbling while making virtual world toys for young children.

Chapter 47 : Change #6

November 2nd

An abandoned school in Gunma Prefecture, Japan.

The schoolyard, which should have been filled with silence in the middle of the night after being abandoned for years with no one passing by, was now filled with girls riding all sorts of vehicles making loud noises.

Vroom vroom!

Ratatatatat!

Grrrr

Neigh neigh

Whoosh

“Hey, only formidable ones gathered for this Hyakki Yagyō (Night Parade of One Hundred Demons)?”

A girl sitting in a racing kart she summoned swallowed hard.

The girl in the racing kart explained in detail to two girls who said they were participating for the first time this round about how to participate in the race, the route, and the rules to follow, and now she was introducing the participants.

“That one riding the elephant has been participating since the early days of Hyakki Yagyō, an original member, and the one riding the unicorn is a strong competitor who won the last tournament, and that one over there is known as a speed maniac in the Kyushu region and was even briefly mentioned in Walpurgis.”

“…There seem to be only losers, nfufu.”

“Hoeee… they look boring…”

“That’s because you don’t know well.”

The born 1-star girl riding on the kart shrugged her shoulders and said, feeling like she had now become a senior explaining this Hyakki Yagyō to the newcomers.

“You can’t judge magical girls’ rides by their appearance.”

Just herself she had underestimated the gloomy-looking girl riding a rainbow-colored unicorn in the last tournament and was so shocked when she instantly took the lead.

“Nfufu, then, isn’t flying the best?”

“Hoeee… boring…”

“If you go up more than 3 meters from the ground and drive more than 10 meters, you’re disqualified!”

She was really annoyed by the girl with a broad forehead who seemed like she wanted to hit her once, sneering, and the girl wearing a cat-ear helmet responding with a dejected voice.

‘Ah, these two are really annoying, should I hit that forehead once?’

But if it led to a conflict and this illegal tournament, banned due to traffic laws and noise issues, got caught by the security force or the council, she might become someone who could never take out her kart again in places where ordinary citizens go.

Shudder.

She didn’t want to become someone pitifully earning starlight by saying, ‘Pl… please eat ramen!’ in the Garden plaza with her abilities sealed after finally becoming a bloomed magical girl.

“Hmph, I’ve explained everything.”

Vroom

The girl put on her safety helmet with a visibly sulky expression and nonchalantly went to the start line.

“Nfufu, shall Nanami do it?”

Shake shake

Nanami, wearing the cat-ear helmet, expressed her refusal and spoke while making hesitant gestures.

“Hoet, well… I have my pride too. If I stand at the start line and race with such losers… it would be unfair to my bike…”

“Nfufu, Nanami is surprisingly picky about racing～”

Pat pat

Kohane patted Nanami’s cat-ear helmet and then walked leisurely to the start line, dragging her loose gown. The magical girls standing at the start line played pranks on Kohane, such as shining lights on her forehead or honking horns, and sneered.

“Hey, isn’t the newbie being too relaxed?”

“Tsk, it’s common sense to standby 15 minutes early for those with less than 3 rounds of experience…”

“My unicorn is howling because it wants to eat up the slowpokes, hehe.”

“Wow, but her forehead is really wide.”

“Why hasn’t she summoned her ride yet?”

All participants stood at the start line drawn on the schoolyard, and the organizers prepared to start today’s race toward the rusty iron gate of the old dilapidated school.

Vroom vroom!

Brrrr!

All participating magical girls raised their excitement, raising the heat of their summons and the tension in their whole bodies to race crazily around Gunma Prefecture tonight.

“Super cool Armor 8 standby.”

“Hm?”

“Armor… [Armor]?”

“…Salon?”

Silence.

The girls there didn’t exchange a single word, but they instinctively felt that today’s race was over.

And they finished calculating which route they should take to avoid being caught.

The girls exchanged glances and had a silent discussion about which direction each should go and how to avoid overlapping.

0.5 seconds.

The girls all ran away at once.

[Armor] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Armor Deployment

Whoosh!

A 5-meter long ivory-colored armor suddenly appeared and fired nets from its two arms, which were almost the same size as its body.

Dozens of girls gathered at the start line struggled, trapped in the nets.

“Aaaah!! It’s the council!! It’s the council’s lackey!!”

“Our rush must not be stopped!!”

“This is a violation of magical girls’ rights!!”

[Nfufu, what a great catch.]

“Hoeet, please don’t struggle.”

Click click

Nanami photographed and recorded the faces of the girls trapped in the net one by one, and immediately bundled them into albums and sent them to Tsugumi, the head of the security force, calling them persons of interest files.

[Shall we go to the central garden like this?]

“You guys! After I worked so hard to tell you about Hyakki Yagyō!!”

The girl in the racing kart who had been acting like a senior and guiding Kohane and Nanami from earlier cried out with a voice full of betrayal.

“Honestly, I wasn’t listening except for the list of participants…”

“How…?!”

* * *

[Protection] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Thousand Spears Ten Thousand Swords

Rustle

When she retrieved the hundreds of lavender Japanese swords she had deployed in the abandoned factory, the subtle pressure flowing from within the space disappeared simultaneously. Sumire, who elegantly shook off the sleeves of her lavender kimono, revealing her legs, and wore the Japanese sword condensed into one at her waist, sighed deeply.

“Did you not see the rules set by Walpurgis? Or do you not know how to read well?”

“You think we’re stupid idiots who don’t even know how to read properly!”

Sumire almost blurted out, ‘That’s right’ in response, but she managed, just barely managed to hold it back.

‘After staying up for 3 nights, I feel my self-control weakening.’

In the wide open space of the abandoned factory where the battle had ended, filled with a subtle smell of gunpowder and flying sparks, 20 magical girls were lying fallen or unconscious, and only the leader magical girl of the magical girl thief gang was still resisting.

“Can you really come up with the idea of using magical girls’ powers to rob art museums and distribute to poor people in your right mind?”

“Ha! Council chairwoman! You may not know because you’re from a well-off family, but in our country, there are people everywhere who can barely eat a piece of bread a day! I’ll steal for them!”

“No, but even so, coming up with the idea of robbing an art museum… there are many other volunteer activities, right?”

“Ha! Council chairwoman! Are you trying to make me conform to the logic of capitalists who want to subjugate me to the social system! I’ll steal as much of that world’s pretense as I want!”

“Isn’t it more of an act of subjugation to the social system to distribute stolen goods to normal people?”

“Ha! Council chairwoman! The money games of rich people who get hundreds of millions of yen for putting one dot! I’d rather steal that and use it to help the poor!”

“Why does your idea keep leading to theft?!”

Throb

Sumire pressed her forehead, which was starting to tighten from stress, with her slender fingers.

Let’s be patient.

No matter how foolish, they’re magical girls.

They’re people I need to protect.

It’s the trust and duty that person gave me.

Feeling that she might put personal feelings into it if she dealt with that girl herself, Sumire spoke through the radio.

“…Rena.”

[Yes, boss.]

Thud!

“Ack! The violence of capitalism!”

A rubber non-lethal bullet flew from far away, and with a strange scream, the last thief gang magical girl fell silent.

“…Kaede.”

“Yes, miss.”

From behind Sumire’s shadow, a girl in a small body wearing a men’s suit with long hair loosely tied quietly appeared and tied up the unconscious thief gang magical girls with ropes.

“Haah.”

Magical girls trying to commit thoughtless acts based on flimsy logic led by heroic psychology like this were increasing explosively.

These incidents occurred where the desire to become special beings based on unconscious resentment toward society intertwined with the enormous potential of magical girls.

[Korean hero magical girls Kang Eunseol and Park Saebyeok.]

[Appearance of super-large magical girls comparable to Beginning?]

[Stopping terrorists that Europe couldn't stop!]

In particular, witnessing the shining of two magical girl heroes who rose simultaneously with the recent worldwide terrorist magical girl incident became a decisive trigger.

"We want to become shining magical girls like that too!"

However, it was difficult to see such dramatic scenes in Japan, which had been forming a stable magical girl society since [Beginning]'s declaration. So girls began to choose stages outside Walpurgis' control to show off their shine.

'Without any regard for the terribleness of the terrorists or the confused atmosphere of the victims, just clinging to heroic psychology…'

It happened because most were girls still lacking responsibility, but from Sumire's position who had to manage and supervise them, it was just depressing.

There was even a time when all sorts of entertainment magical girls held impromptu performances using SNS to show off living, moving paintings and music that became reality and spewed out, gathering hundreds of thousands of people in the Shinjuku and Shibuya areas, causing police, the security forces, and Salon to mobilize simultaneously, mistaking it for a riot.

In areas near Tokyo, summoning-type magical girls held dangerous speeding competitions and illegal racing broadcasts that directly violated road traffic laws.

They also held competitions to competitively show off their charms by secretly collaborating with various companies and statistics sites to hold popularity polls based on the appearance or abilities of magical girls sponsored by companies.

Magical girls who solved all kinds of violent incidents on their own while touring regions like the Green Vigilante of Tokyo, the Martial Artist of Sapporo, and the Bear Hunter of Kyushu were even getting new aliases.

‘It can be seen as just a bit heated competitive spirit for now, but…’

Sumire felt that the flowers in the greenhouse were gradually unable to control their growth power.

The desire to shine more than other magical girls, not just being satisfied with showing off to others…

“As magical girls grow, the things we need to solve are increasing too…”

[Are you tired?]

“Other countries are in serious situations, but magical girls are burning such childish competitive spirit…”

[After all, wanting to compete, fight and win seems to be human instinct, boss.]

Flinch

Kaede’s hands, which were tying up the fallen thief gang, trembled a bit at Rena’s radio transmission, but Sumire, whose eyes were closed for a moment due to fatigue, didn’t notice.

“How should I report this situation to the king…”

As soon as the magical girl of [Beginning] was mentioned, Kaede thought of a certain person.

“Kaede?”

“…Yes, miss, I’ve completed everything.”

Sumire tilted her head, looking at Kaede like that.

Chapter 48 : Organizing the Situation

Aside from the strange sense of naming it ＜Magical Girl HAZARD＞, this game was full of contradictions.

Girls who realize their dreams bloom their supernatural abilities with the first shine.

Girls who receive the gravity of fate at the second light create a flow that will determine destiny.

The four strong ones with the third light build domains to protect such girls.

If everyone's power defeats the demons sent by the evil gods like that, a future full of happiness and dreams remains.

Excluding traps like the curse of struggle or the red broadcast with unknown cycles, the rules of this game are full of kindness.

What was the intention of the evil gods who revealed such malicious rules that could create such a virtuous cycle if you just helped avoid a few traps?

Among the four magical girls with the third light, three are completely indifferent to most living humans, and the only one interested in humans is [War], who leads humanity in a cruel direction – what does this mean?

Is the flow of all these things the author's intention to consume girls' tears as entertainment?

Why did they give the empty throne of a world with only a few magical girls left to the protagonist Shikishima Yuki without

revealing the whole story of all this until the end?

Why did the evil gods silently disappear after the final trial?

I couldn't understand in the end.

* * *

November 2nd

"Cheer up, Hikari-chan~ Ah~"

"Ah…"

Hana poked some spicy rice cake with a fork and gave it to me, and I ate it *nom nom.*

I brought Korean food bought from Myeong-dong and sent messages to Ichika and Hana to eat together, and I had a meal with the two who came to the Garden immediately.

'Kyoko said she was busy with cafe work.'

Bang!

Whoosh!

While the faint sound of air being cut could be heard from the distant forest, we sat on a mat together, blankly eating spicy rice cake.

"Ichika always eats quickly and leaves…"

"Even on the day Mom invited Kyoko and Ichika, saying she'd make dinner, Ichika finished eating in 5 minutes."

"That's a habit perfect for getting stomach problems when you get older…"

"Hehe, Hikari-chan sometimes really sounds like an old man."

"…"

Ichika was practicing all kinds of kicks in the forest, saying she was

digesting after eating hurriedly.

'Wouldn't it come back up if you do that when you're full…'

Our secret space, the so-called 'Odaiba Magic Show' Garden, was like a private room that I only told really close people about, and we often gathered here to spend time when we were free like this.

"Hikari-chan~ It's good to see you after a long time."

"…Yeah, I'm happy to see Hana-chan after a long time too."

After confirming the complete silence of the Scavengers, we gradually entered into actions for follow-up and accident prevention.

I, as [Beginning], and the Chinese and European ambassadors, with the guarantee of [Cyberbrain], another domain owner, and the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Headquarters, reached an agreement on domain issues, and then decided to have further discussions directly at embassies or on-site.

And during the free time that came, I boldly approached [Dream] and [Sea].

The result was a complete failure.

'Jo Yeonseo went abroad, and I couldn't even see Hong Nayeon's face…'

Born 2-star magical girl of [Dream], Jo Yeonseo.

The kind magical girl of [Dream] who connected and communicated through dreams, the unconscious space of all living beings, and protected people with powerful sleep magic.

To meet her, I investigated and visited a hospital in Gyeonggi-do that appeared as a place protecting people in the original work, and asked around the patients there, but…

-I came looking for a friend, is there a patient named Jo Yeonseo among the long-term patients here?

-Yeonseo? Ah~ You're Yeonseo's friend!

-Student Yeonseo? I heard she was discharged in July this year and went to Russia with her grandfather.

-Eh.

Born 2-star magical girl of [Sea], Hong Nayeon.

The magical girl of [Sea] who drove away demons and plunderers from Busan's seaside and uses powerful elemental magic.

To meet her, who was said to have quit school and wandered around the seaside from long before the original work, I went to Busan, but…

-Is Hong Nayeon student here? From the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Headquarters…

-Get out.

-Eh.

She didn't even open the door.

I stubbornly waited in front of the door for 6 hours, but in the meantime when I went to the bathroom due to nature's call that finally came.

She completely disappeared from home.

"I heard she didn't like foreigners from long ago, so I even asked Dorim to issue a real Korean ID for me and went…"

"Hikari-chan… cheer up."

Pat pat

Hana patted me with spicy rice cake sauce on her mouth, and I wiped Hana's mouth with the edge of the cape on my magical girl outfit.

"Hehe."

“…Hana-chan, is everything okay in Japan? Is Master doing well?”

“Yeah! Kyoko recently got a barista certificate and bragged, so I praised her, saying she’s 3 times better than Hikari-chan.”

“No, I wasn’t that bad, was I?”

“Oh, and it was on the news telling magical girls not to fight!”

“…What?”

My heart sank.

Did someone who admires the Scavengers appear while I was out of the country?

If so, I had to hurry back even if I had to get a small plane from Dorim.

“Ha-Hana-chan why… exactly…? Did everyone fight over stars or something?”

“Hm?”

“Haah, Sato kiddo, you’ll confuse people if you talk like that.”

Ichika, who had approached without notice, shook her head and explained.

“It’s just that recently there’s been a rapid increase in magical girls acting up because they want to stand out, so Fujimoto’s daughter sent a message asking them to stop showing off.”

“Is wanting to stand out such a problem?”

“Hundreds of thousands of people gather when magical girls say they’re holding surprise concerts in Shibuya and Shinjuku, all kinds of illegal racing is held nationwide, strange buildings are built and cause riots, it’s really crazy.”

“Why on earth would they do such things…”

“When you suddenly get great power that can turn the world upside

down, how boring is it to just boast quietly! Competition! You have to compete!"

Hah

Ichika struck a cool pose, pointing to herself.

"…Among them, I'm continuing my midnight heroic deeds!"

"In the end, you're the same troublemaker."

"No! No! How rewarding is it to help the weak and clean up troublemakers with magical girl powers!"

"Uuu, Ichika is the same too!"

Hana booed at Ichika with her hands cupped around her mouth.

By the way, to say that magical girls who bloomed early are just causing trouble because they need a place to use their powers…

Hmm…

'Should I make a sparring ground and track in the Garden for them to play?'

It would also help build strength to protect themselves in dangerous situations like the recent Scavenger rampage.

Since there's the almighty healing magic Heal, I could just give them an empty lot to play, but…

'As the owner of the Garden who can use large-scale illusion magic indistinguishable from reality, there's no need to do that.'

If they need a place to run wild like that, I can create an illusory space completely identical to reality.

I thought it could be a great help for future events if even 1 out of 100 magical girls experiences and becomes familiar with a fight that feels exactly like reality.

It's a method I hadn't thought of because the competitive situation of

magical girls fighting itself approached me like a big nightmare, but…

“Why don’t we talk to Fujimoto-san later about holding various competitions and such?”

“Wow! Magical girl competition! It’ll be super super fun!”

“Ooh, my fists are starting to tingle.”

“You should have a conscience… born 2-stars play among themselves.”

“Eeh… there are probably just under 20 properly confirmed ones in Japan as far as I know…”

“I’m thinking of formally establishing domain policies in China and Europe soon too, so I’ll tell them as well.”

“Ooh, a world magical girl fighting tournament? I’m getting fired up!”

I smiled bitterly looking at Ichika’s eyes that started to sparkle.

“I’m not sure how many will participate even if we put up good prizes… but it could at least be an interesting neighborhood sports day or fighting ground, right?”

Even if they’re magical girls, most are ordinary girls.

Probably only weirdos like Ichika would participate even if we open sweaty training grounds and fighting tournaments like this.

“Hmm… it might be more intense than expected…”

“Haha, Hana-chan too… there aren’t that many people in the world who want to fight like that, the kids in Japan were just throwing tantrums because they felt stifled.”

Thinking of floating this idea to the magical girl domain self-governing bodies soon, I got up from my seat.

“Then I’ll be going now.”

“Ah… you said the Chinese magical girls called you to talk about the domain, right?”

“Yeah, specifically the embassy.”

“Hikari-chan! Good luck!”

Clap

Hana and I high-fived.

I wonder what impression the Chinese magical girls will give?

I was excited to go see the kids that Dorim and I worked hard to save.

* * *

“The Chinese magical girls will never bow their heads.”

“Hahahahaha…!”

“…Dorim, hold back, no punching!”

Chapter 49 : Organizing the Situation

Li Meilin, the born 2-star magical girl of [Harmony] wearing a bamboo-colored palace dress, threw her whole body on the floor in a full kowtow as soon as she entered the back room for an informal tea party of magical girl representatives from three countries after the official reception at the Chinese embassy in Hyoja-dong.

Thud

The elegant zither she held fell to the floor with a heavy sound.

Tremble tremble

Her long black straight hair fluttered on the floor like an orchid, and her fragile body that looked like it would break if tapped shook so much that the floor trembled.

Tremble tremble

“Um, now you should get up and talk…”

“Pl-please spare… my life…”

“No, if you’re going to cower and prostrate yourself right away, why did you put on that show?”

“Wh-what happened in the front room was… be-being watched by hi-high-ranking officials on camera…”

The damage caused by this terrorist attack in China was more severe than what was publicly disclosed.

The buildings of the party-affiliated Supernatural Ability Association near Sichuan and Shanghai were all destroyed, and all the civilians

inside the buildings, patients waiting for treatment, and even high-ranking party members were all killed.

Along with the persistent, almost obsessive destruction of state facilities carried out by the magical girl of [Sword], two huge cities experienced chaos comparable to wartime conditions due to persistent strikes on infrastructure.

On top of that, they failed to repel [Sword] even after taking the extreme measure of launching missiles while risking friendly fire.

“There was really nothing we could do…!”

Half of the 240 proud magical girls who were rising as the hope of all China died in one night.

The remaining half who were active in Beijing escaped somewhere in flight.

Of course, the operation of magical girls escaping to Korea with American help was kept secret from the public, but China was in chaos as the hope of incurable diseases being cured by magical girls completely disappeared.

In such a situation, Korea and Japan established protection organizations with their own magical girls rising up, but the picture of Chinese magical girls seeming to be subordinate to other countries looked very bad to party members… that was the circumstance of this matter.

“That’s not my business.”

Kang Dorim said, tidying her long silver hair back and adjusting the silver interpreter made with the cyberbrain world that she was fiddling with in her ear.

Of course, I had been wearing that interpreter since earlier too.

“I-I actually don’t know anything about politics at all! I just did what I was told every day, like heal someone or play music… this time too, they made me the representative just because I’m the only 2-star and my face is pretty…”

Hiing

Li Meilin spoke with big tearful eyes.

Indeed, as she said, Li Meilin was a girl with outstandingly beautiful looks even among magical girls.

Her hair that grew straight down to her waist swayed like willow branches and gave off a subtle fragrance, and her body, neither too big nor too small, drew harmonious curves.

Beauty.

If I had to sum it up in one word, she was a girl that the word 'beauty' came to mind first.

"The kids who were good at fighting and had cool abilities and received education from the party to be in charge of politics or diplomacy all went to Shanghai and died… they just told me to do it; it's not really what I thought of! Please believe me!"

"No, I know that, but why did you put on that show that just pisses people off, really."

"Huiii… Even the Chairman told me to ask to be as understanding as possible behind the scenes! Really!"

Kang Dorim swung her slender arms around angrily, and Li Meilin turned pale white, knowing that Dorim was a 3-star magical girl who had declared (as was known) a domain.

"I'm really just the daughter of a poor musician family, so I have little education and can only do what the high-ranking people tell me to do! Please spare me!"

Rub rub

Li Meilin rubbed her delicate palms together in various ways, begging for forgiveness.

She had enough rubbing power that if given chopsticks and noodles in blackbean sauce, she could easily mix 10 bowls.

To summarize all of this, the attitude of the Chinese Chairman was…

-I'm sorry, I'm in big trouble… please save my face in front of the kids…

…something like this.

Somehow, unlike the arrogant attitude, the content of the diplomatic document that didn't put forward any conditions other than establishing a self-governing body, and the attitude of beating around the bush looking for justification, didn't match.

"I understand, so let's talk about the details."

I forcibly lifted Li Meilin with brute force and moved her to the table where the tea was cooling.

"Eek!?"

"First of all, I really don't want anything from China other than the safety of magical girls as [Beginning]."

"R-really…?"

In the first place, Chinese magical girls were mostly born 1-stars and children who barely survived the threat of terrorism, so there was nothing to demand from them.

Li Meilin twisted her body slightly and glanced at me.

"Really really?"

"Yes."

"Really? I'm going to record from now on, okay?"

Li Meilin took out a recorder from her sleeve, tilted her head slightly, and glanced at me.

Her slender fingers slowly moved up along the recorder, and she slightly parted her moist lips and gently bit her lower lip with her neat front teeth.

"Really no take-backs?"

"…"

"Oh stop with the coquetry, you crazy bitch!"

Bang!

Kang Dorim, who seemed frustrated with Li Meilin constantly twisting her body and testing the waters, slammed the table and shouted.

"Hiing, but… but I'm the official representative, this attitude isn't right… please maintain some dignity…"

Li Meilin squirmed, twisting her whole body as if a bug had gotten into her clothes.

"You said to do it off the record!"

"So I'm turning on the recorder now…"

Click

Li Meilin cleared her throat and timidly turned on the recorder.

Unlike the timid attitude she showed until now, Li Meilin started speaking with confident pronunciation like a heroine from a martial arts movie.

"…I, the magical girl of [Harmony], as the representative of China's Supernatural Ability Association, proudly demand that the magical girl of [Beginning] guarantee the sovereignty and autonomy of Chinese magical girls."

"…Yes, I, the magical girl of [Beginning], recognize the establishment of a self-governing body for Chinese magical girls and swear not to impose any restrictions on any actions other than infringing on the sovereignty held by magical girls of other countries."

Click

"Wow! It's done! Time to go home!"

"…"

Li Meilin excitedly jumped around, holding the recorder, then glanced at me warily and hid the recorder in her chest.

Kang Dorim shook her head seeing that.

In the first place, it was about setting conditions for creating a safe zone for magical girls within my ability, which was close to a natural phenomenon, so the informal talks between the representative magical girls of three Northeast Asian countries were successfully concluded with simple working-level negotiations.

The name of the self-governing body established by Chinese magical girls was 'Bright Moon', taken from a verse in Li Bai's poem, containing longing for the dead magical girls and those who disappeared.

* * *

November 3rd

"When we fought together back then, I didn't notice because it was chaotic, but you speak Korean quite well, [Beginning]."

Park Saebyeok, sitting in the seat next to me, was smiling with her pink hair completely twisted up while wearing the female dress uniform of the army.

It was a hairstyle carefully done so that her hair would be completely covered if she put on her cap.

The reason for trying to completely hide her hair was that her red-series hair would stand out when attending the memorial service for European Union magical girls in Brussels.

I was accompanying her this time as the magical girl of [Beginning], dressed as a magical girl.

"Fufu, you didn't know? I even have a Korean identity."

Shrug.

Park Saebyeok, who had encountered me as ‘Kang Eunbit’ several times, noticed my identity and smiled bitterly.

“Is it Kang Dorim’s doing… But Kang Dorim is a talented person who keeps a smart and righteous mind, so she must have done it with a purpose.”

Suddenly, I remembered Dorim at the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Headquarters just before departing today, habitually calling Park Saebyeok a ‘crazy bitch’ while laughing and talking about her crazy patriotic episodes.

‘Is this the difference in capacity…’

The magical girl of [Beginning], who had been a mysterious person of unknown identity, began to be recognized as one identity after going through the debutante, domain declaration, fight with terrorists, East Asian magical girl talks, and more.

Above all, it was significant that she really didn’t put forward any conditions for providing domains to Chinese magical girls. After witnessing the autonomous operation of Japan, the first direct jurisdiction, she was treated as a kind of supernatural ability totem.

“…Europe, huh.”

Even Japan was the first place I visited in this world, but to think I would end up going to Europe to declare a domain.

I ended up taking a transport plane launched by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs together with Park Saebyeok, who was invited to the memorial service after promising to allocate the domain expanded by Kang Dorim’s 3-star blooming to Europe, specifically Belgium, where the European Union’s executive committee is located.

Europe, which suffered the most damage from [Revenge] and [Bombing], with 200 deaths and only 42 magical girls surviving.

I was going with Park Saebyeok to meet the representative there, the magical girl of [Unity].

Chapter 50 : Organizing the Situation

The atmosphere at the Belgian airport where Park Saebyeok and I arrived was calm.

Since we were entering the country directly through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, aides from the Korean and Japanese embassies who came rushing without going through separate procedures guided us.

'…It's quiet.'

Although the only airports I had been to in both my past and current life were Narita Airport in Japan and Incheon Airport in Korea, I remember airports being noisier places than this.

Brussels Airport had a sense of orderliness to the noise and vitality that people usually make.

Armed police were standing guard in each corridor and passage, and soldiers were patrolling the airport exterior.

"The atmosphere in Europe after the terrorist attack is not very good."

"This is already much better as they are implementing gradual return to daily life."

The Korean and Japanese aides guiding us to where the car was prepared continued explaining the current atmosphere in Europe in their respective languages as we walked.

"Since supernatural ability users appeared in each country, the sense of loss among citizens is very great, as much as the respect and attention the magical girls gathered in the European Union received."

“People who received help from various places are gathering, having heard rumors that this joint memorial service will be held in Brussels.”

Park Saebyeok could understand all the explanations given in different languages from both sides because she was wearing the interpreter made by Kang Dorim.

“Mr. Yamada, which gate number was it that the European Union prepared?”

“It was number 4, Mr. Kim.”

The Korean and Japanese embassy aides often exchanged words in English as they were acquaintances who frequently saw each other.

“Regarding the domain matter, they asked to proceed at the location designated by the EU Parliament as per the content sent to the magical girl of [Beginning] in advance.”

“Yes, I can’t interfere with the event while the memorial service is in progress, so I’ll just make preparations and take measures for it to be completed immediately tomorrow.”

“Thank you for your consideration.”

The Japanese embassy side seemed to have decided to focus solely on the role of guiding me, putting aside all curiosities and minor confirmations, as there wasn’t really anything to cooperate on regarding me, who was treated as a kind of supernatural phenomenon totem.

In the first place, there was nothing to negotiate as the European Union side had already informed me of the optimal location considering the intentions of the 42 surviving magical girls, after carefully examining facilities located in areas to be included in the domain, including Brussels, the Netherlands, Germany, and France.

‘Their attitude is more straightforward than I thought.’

I thought the Japanese government would be uncomfortable with me because of Fujimoto or corporate alliance matters, or that there

would be a war of words about my current position, but they were dealing with it swiftly in a manner of handling the work first.

‘Is it because I’m an existence too detached to be tied to a country, or is it something Sumire handled separately?’

Europe’s attitude also seemed to hope that the issue of protection organizations for magical girls would be resolved as soon as the memorial service ended, perhaps due to their sense of crisis.

Even China, where half of the state-recognized magical girls survived, rushed into the domain without putting any conditions other than establishing a self-governing body.

Given the situation in Europe, where supernatural ability users are virtually annihilated, there’s practically no choice.

‘Rather, this dry totem treatment isn’t bad.’

Since Park Saebyeok and I were essentially treated as a set of guests who came along from Korea, we rode in the van prepared by the European Union side along with the Korean and Japanese aides and accompanied them to the European Union Parliament.

“We’ve arrived.”

“There are many people.”

“We’ll enter through the back over there.”

After entering inconspicuously through the back door of the parliament building, a very tall, brown-haired girl entered the room where we were waiting.

It was Laura Müller, the born 2-star magical girl of [Unity], who would conduct the memorial service as the representative of European Union magical girl survivors.

Laura was touching the hem of her black dress changed for the memorial service with a tired expression, then interlaced her fingers and emitted a bright brown light reminiscent of a wheat field all over her body, and exchanged greetings with us.

Whether she used some kind of interpretation or communication magic, her words were understandable even without going through the interpreter.

“…”

“…”

We had already shared detailed talks with the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team and Korean-Japanese working-level officials.

Now, just before the memorial service, we just came to say hello, so the three of us shared an awkward silence.

“…Then I’ll be going.”

“Yes, thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule.”

“…”

Laura suddenly looked at me and asked before leaving with weak steps.

“…If the domain is spread, will the remaining magical girls be safe…?”

“If you just think of the domain inside when a dangerous situation comes, you can escape to a place where no one in this world can touch you.”

“…I see, thank you.”

“Let’s talk about the details after you gather your thoughts and through the self-governing body you’ll establish after the domain declaration.”

“…Yes.”

Laura walked away again with blank steps.

“…She still seems to be in great shock.”

“It’s unavoidable because losing colleagues you saved lives and lived

with right before your eyes is sad."

European magical girls were particularly heavily damaged in this terrorist attack because they formed a multinational community within the European Union institution.

"…"

Park Saebyeok seemed to feel something about the situation of losing comrades, as she couldn't say anything while looking at the calm atmosphere spread over Brussels.

* * *

"Therefore, we will not yield to enemies who threaten our daily lives and with a dignified attitude…"

Laura was calmly reading the prepared text at the Grand Place, the central square in Brussels.

Mourners placed candles and bouquets they were each holding on chairs inscribed with the names of the 200 dead.

As she read with the magical power of the magical girl of [Unity] radiating, tens of thousands of people gathered in the beautiful square filled with 15th-century European-style architecture listened attentively to Laura's recitation.

"The more darkness tries to swallow us, the more we become one as light…"

Even as she read the recitation written by various European Union spokespersons with sentences refined with literary vocabulary about the unwavering strength of Europeans, Laura didn't feel it.

-Laura! Come visit our hometown this winter! Uncle said he'll specially serve pizza baked with oak firewood!

-Laura, we were too busy to go on a proper vacation this year. Let's go south together next summer!

-Ahaha, my sister's husband is American, so we can rent a car, how about

going to America?

-Shh! Shh! Wait! I think I hear the nun's footsteps! Turn off the light!

-How old are we to still have lights-out checks?

-No matter how much you grumble, we can't help it while we're staying at the convent.

-Ow, Marie, don't push so suddenly!

"Become one…"

The dreamlike memories of girls who spent hot summer days traveling all over Europe together clearly remained in this heart.

Though their homes, races, and languages were different, they became friends who shared their true hearts based on Laura's ability.

The memory of saving dying people in the ICU together and hugging friends crying with overwhelming pride is vivid.

"Become one…"

Laura, who spilled nasty french fries in England and got surrounded by seagulls.

Sophie, who secretly spent a night in her hometown when they stopped in the Netherlands and got scolded by the guide.

Elena, who boasted about her hometown at the convent in Italy.

Marie from Paris, who said she would study abroad in America like her sister when she became an adult.

And…

"…"

When Laura fell completely silent, the people at the scene began to murmur in confusion.

"…Even so."

As Laura quietly folded the oath she was holding and reading, the European Union parliamentary officials watching from behind began to stand up to see what was happening.

“…Nevertheless.”

Laura opened her mouth, remembering the 11 members of Rescue Team D who all died by the terrorist except for herself.

“The girls who gathered together on a bright summer day.”

“Those who gave miraculous memories when the wheat fields turned golden.”

“Friends who disappeared with the start of a lonely winter.”

Laura finally realized the death of her friends.

The death of friends who were chattering in anticipation of next year in the moonlight of a dark night.

“Please remember, at least for today.”

Pop

A spark rose from a candle held by someone in the crowd and floated up to the sky.

Pop

Sparks rose one by one from candles placed on chairs inscribed with the girls’ names.

“This is…”

“Amazing…”

The crowd murmured as they watched the small lights floating above their heads.

But as they continued one by one and finally, tens of thousands of lights floating over the square where the memorial service was held gathered to form a miniature Milky Way, people quietly watched or

prayed, drawn by its beauty.

Remembering the salvation they received from them with one candle.

Remembering the girls who disappeared too quickly with one candle…

Under the Milky Way engraved with memories, people prayed and remembered.

* * *

After the memorial service ended and the crowd was dispersing from the square, a brown-haired girl wearing glasses was placing a flower on each of the 200 chairs one by one.

The sight of the girl taking out white flowers from a large basket and placing them one by one on top of the 200 chairs looked solemn yet mechanical at a glance.

"…You must have received great kindness from the girls who were here? Were your father or mother very ill?"

An old man, surprised by the girl's sincere questions, asked while clicking his tongue.

"Huh? No."

"Then why are you putting in so much effort?"

"Because defeat should be respected as much as victory as the ending of a story."

"What?"

"I was respecting them."

"…I don't understand."

The old man left the place as if running away, scared by the face of the bespectacled girl illuminated by the flickering light of candles placed on the ground.

“Hehe, it wasn’t something I said to be understood.”

The bespectacled girl gently watched the old man run away, then began placing flowers on the chairs again.

“…Don’t talk like that.”

“Hm?”

When the bespectacled girl turned around.

A silver-haired girl in a black women’s suit was coldly looking at her.

“Don’t talk about these children in terms of defeat or victory like that.”

“…But if there’s no winning or losing, there’s no valuable distinction in this world.”

“You probably just don’t understand values other than winning and losing.”

“Hm? How beautiful are victory and defeat?”

The bespectacled girl tilted her head as if she had heard something strange and said.

“Isn’t humanity starting to move forward, realizing the preciousness of victory through these children’s noble defeat?”

“I don’t know how great you think you are to arbitrarily judge people like that.”

“Hah, I don’t know how great you think you are to say such arrogant words affirming everyone.”

The two girls watched each other for a moment, illuminated by the flickering candlelight.

The bespectacled girl felt a sense of kinship with the silver-haired girl.

The silver-haired girl felt disgust toward the bespectacled girl.

“…Emily.”

“What?”

“My name.”

“…”

“Aren’t you going to tell me your name?”

“…Hikari.”

“Oh! A name meaning light in Japanese! It suits you!”

Hehe

Emily, who smiled brightly, soon turned her back and started placing flowers on the chairs again.

Hikari watched that for a moment, then shook her head and disappeared somewhere.

As Emily was humming, thinking about the naughty ones who had all gone somewhere in Russia after waiting in vain for magical girls evacuating to America, someone living deep in her soul muttered.

[…I’ll be watching.]

[O apostle resembling the first goddess.]

Chapter 51 : The Flame Reignites

November 10th

Emily Hopkins

She was not a magical girl.

“…”

It was just intuition.

Due to the disgust left by the momentary conversation, I suspected her of being a magical girl who followed the Scavengers and secretly followed her, even searching the lodgings where she stayed.

She was from England and had come to Belgium to participate in the memorial service, and was an elite who was set to receive a doctorate at a young age.

While hurriedly completing the domain, I tracked the lingering traces of magical power I felt from her, but.

She was an ordinary person.

Then what was the source of this intense disgust I felt towards her?

[…Humanity has started to move forward, realizing the preciousness of victory, right?]

That one line.

If I acknowledged that line which seemed to refer to the movements of countries beginning to quietly accept my domain declaration after the Scavengers’ rampage,

It felt like I could never go back.

"…"

I put down the file of personal investigation I had done on Emily Hopkins on the glass table.

Flash

"Hm?"

I felt one of the stars in the domain I had spread in Japan blooming.

Since delivering the news at the Walpurgis Grand Council, where magical girl self-governing bodies from each country exchange opinions, that a 'friendly match' to promote the growth of magical girls would be held soon, there have been many cases of rapid blooming.

"…Am I trying to raise them too safely?"

I wanted to guide them in a completely opposite direction from the path in the original work that led to tragedy along with competition to steal each other's stars, so I induced them in a direction where the word 'competition' itself didn't come to mind, but…

"I tried to quickly recruit the strong ones who appeared in the original work first…"

The recruitment of reliable companions who appeared in the original work all failed except for Ichika.

Shikishima Yuki only appears in the place mentioned in the original work in January next year.

The magical girl of [Navigation] in Russia also cannot be located currently.

The rest of the magical girls completely disappeared after the Scavengers' rampage.

'[Sea] is still looking for an opportunity but is on hold for now…'

Rather, those who did not appear in the original work or had disappeared, like Hana, Kyoko, Sumire, Kang Dorim, Park Saebyeok, Li Meilin, and Laura, remained and became companions, drawn by my actions.

“Things really don’t go as planned.”

Slurp

I drank the black tea on the glass table, crossed my legs, and secretly watched the Walpurgis Grand Council proceeding.

* * *

The Central Garden expanded further with the establishment of the Grand Council.

A huge new domain was created outside the existing space where the council held meetings, and it changed into various forms influenced by the mental images of the magical girl self-governing body representatives.

Behind Sumire, the magical girl of [Protection], and the group participating as representatives, there was a rose garden with colorless light flowing, heavily influenced by [Beginning].

“Let’s decide the entries by gathering all applicants from each country.”

“If we do that, won’t Japan, where most of the world’s magical girls are, definitely win?”

Hmph

Li Meilin, the magical girl of [Harmony], said with a haughty face while twirling her hair. Behind her was a neatly arranged bamboo forest, and the Chinese delegation was seated on bamboo-colored wooden chairs and tables.

“It’s not a national competition, so just remove the country name and add an alias for individual fights.”

Kang Dorim, the magical girl of [Cyberbrain], spoke while swinging her short legs floating above the ash-gray chair. The Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team's area was very similar to the appearance of the castle in [Cyberbrain]'s domain, with opaque 0s and 1s floating on the floor.

"There will probably be people unofficially broadcasting among magical girls anyway, so why not make it an official public competition?"

Laura, the magical girl of [Unity], quietly pointed out while holding her brown-tinged robe. Behind her stretched an endless golden wheat field swaying quietly like waves.

"Oh, don't worry about that, I've already decided to stream it online."

Kang Dorim said, flapping her tiny palms.

"I'll distribute allocated servers and stuff as I see fit. Real-time censorship is possible too."

"Censorship…?"

Sumire answered Laura's question on behalf of her:

"The magical girl of [Beginning] has deployed illusion magic that automatically makes it indistinguishable from reality for those who enter the arena as participants."

"Then… even if we fight, we won't actually get hurt… and censorship means…"

Li Meilin's complexion gradually turned pale as if she realized something.

"…Getting stronger through fights that feel like real battles."

"Hmm."

"Well, we don't know if such extreme fights will happen, but those who aren't prepared can be told to toughen up in separate training grounds first."

Kang Dorim continued speaking with a grin.

“This friendly match is just like a demonstration game, so don’t feel too pressured~”

“What about… prizes?”

Li Meilin raised her hand slightly and asked.

“There are none.”

“I heard there aren’t any.”

“I said it’s a friendly match.”

“Eeh?! That’s! I’ll contact the cosmetics company I modeled for and foreign electronics companies right away!”

“Oh, you did that kind of thing too?”

Shrug

Li Meilin spoke while emphasizing her beautiful face with both hands.

“Of course! I’m pretty, aren’t I!”

Fwip

“Ow?!”

Kang Dorim seemed to find that annoying, so she folded one of the documents in front of her into a paper airplane and threw it at Li Meilin.

“Then we would appreciate it if you could inform the magical girls in charge of council administration once the details are decided.”

Sumire concluded the meeting with those words.

The representatives of each country’s self-governing bodies left through the passages they had entered with their delegations.

After that day, major corporations, entertainment companies, and broadcasters from various countries sent requests to the council expressing their desire to participate.

“I’ll have to… pull another all-nighter.”

Sumire muttered quietly.

A week later, an official document about the 1st Magical Girl Friendly Mock Battle Tournament was delivered to the Glass Stars of magical girls in domains around the world.

* * *

If Shikishima Yuki were to name two moments she regretted in her life.

The first was when she was 9 years old and visited her single father’s pottery workshop. While her father briefly went to answer a phone call, she curiously opened the kiln and looked inside, getting burned by the fire.

Fire.

After a moment of life and death where half her face was melted and all the fingers on her right hand were fused together, the word she heard most in her life was ‘monster.’ Her father, overcome with guilt over her appearance, quit the pottery workshop and always came home drunk, creating an awkward relationship.

Always hiding in corners wrapped in bandages, she became someone who feared heat while longing for warmth.

“Someone, talk to me…”

The second was on November 10, 2011, during her last year of middle school, when she decided to run away from her awkward school and father, even months after becoming a magical girl and having her burns healed by receiving a Glass Star.

“I want to find a place where it’s okay for me to exist…”

Until January of the following year, she wandered around various places in Tokyo. Tempted by the promise of food, lodging, and friends, if she joined a supernatural ability user group run by the Fujimoto Group, she entered.

That year, as the civil war between the Alliance and Flag, a rebel group of magical girls, became increasingly violent in Japan, there were many severely injured patients rarely seen normally, and magical girls were welcomed talent wherever they went.

After spending a few months treating Alliance patients at the supernatural ability user group, she heard [War]'s declaration in Shinjuku.

Everything she knew collapsed.

Everyone who had helped her died.

She never saw her father again.

After the nightmarish time passed, all that remained in her hand was the 'Goddess Fragment' that could borrow the world's power just once.

The girl who bloomed [Resurrection] beyond [Flame] in the darkness and overcame the final trial quietly closed her eyes.

That was the end of her story.

"…"

No.

Her story had not ended yet.

Yuki opened her eyes and rose in the darkness.

If she could use the power of [Resurrection] that could only revive her body on the fragment.

Though it was a feeble fragment that couldn't even revive everyone in the current time.

If she gave up even the third light connected to the world.

If she gave up even the second light connected to fate.

Even if all that remained in her hand was just a tiny spark.

She alone could go back.

“I want to… go back…!”

Yuki stood up from the throne and picked up the fragment.

[Resurrection] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Eternal Return

Whoosh

Yuki’s entire body burned like a flame.

All the magical power she had accumulated over the past year fighting demons was sucked into the fragment.

The light of her red Glass Star burning like the sun rapidly diminished.

She felt that she would never be able to use her alias of [Resurrection] again.

Whoosh

The third light that had connected her to the world disappeared along with the flames due to the magic that defied the order set by the gods.

“A world without everyone… I don’t want that…!”

Whoosh

The second light that had connected her to fate disappeared along with the flames due to her choice to deny the time she had walked over the past period.

“Ugh…!”

She watched the disappearing time while crying, denying all those who had helped her, all the sacrifices made to save her.

She felt guilty seeing all the pillars of trials she had so fiercely overcome being rebuilt.

She felt guilty towards those who would suffer again due to her selfishness of wanting to return to the starting point of all nightmares.

“I’m sorry for making everyone’s will as if it never existed… even so…!”

Only a very faint first light remained in her hand.

She disappeared into the darkness of the world along with the flames.

And she returned to where she had been spending time at Tokyo Station on the day she had come out to run away.

Chapter 52 : The Flame Reignites

November 17th

“…Eat your food.”

“…Yes.”

Yuki felt moved even looking at the meal of rice with pickled plums, stir-fried anchovies, and miso soup.

She could eat without having to kill demons pouring down like black rain from the sky.

There was a home with warm blankets without having to burn soil contaminated by demons’ poison and lie down.

She didn’t have to worry about Scavenger magical girls setting traps to steal starlight.

Slurp…

Her father’s clumsy miso soup going down her throat warmly was so delicious that she couldn’t help but shed a few tears.

“…Sniff.”

“…”

Shikishima Ryota, who was awkwardly watching his daughter suddenly bow her head and cry at the dining table, took out a few tissues and gave them to Yuki.

A week ago.

His daughter, who had been spending time outside without going to school, suddenly ran into the house and hugged Ryota who had fallen asleep drunk. Yuki touched Ryota's face several times as if she couldn't believe it, and cried out as if screaming:

"D-Dad…!!!"

"Yuki…!?"

Even after she became a magical girl or whatever, the image of his daughter's face melting before his eyes because of his kiln lingered, so he couldn't treat her the same as before, and the father and daughter who had gradually grown apart due to guilt towards each other hugged for the first time in 5 years.

"Hic… waaaah!"

"Yu…Yuki? Wh-what?! What's wrong?!"

"Uuu, huuu… huuu!"

Seeing his daughter completely bent over on the floor with her small, frail body, just sobbing pitifully, Ryota suddenly felt tears coming too, and the two cried for a long time hugging each other. After crying so much that he lost the energy to go out drinking, Ryota went grocery shopping with Yuki for the first time in years and had a meal together.

"…"

"…"

The awkwardness and guilt that had built up between them for years didn't disappear in an instant, but they made a promise to at least eat meals together. And so, with sudden tears, the father and daughter were gradually getting closer to each other.

Yuki calmly told Ryota about the difficulties of school life she hadn't been able to convey before, and the two awkwardly held hands and went for counseling with the teacher together.

Because a bill had been proposed to show some flexibility regarding

magical girls' attendance issues, Yuki was recognized for her attendance and decided to take a break from school for the remaining period.

"…Take a bath first."

"…Yes."

After finishing her meal and soaking in warm water, Yuki quietly cried again because the bathtub was so warm. After finishing her bath, Yuki came out with a towel wrapped around her damp hair and entered her room.

My room.

The marks on the wall recording her growing height until age 9.

The middle school uniform hanging on top of the wardrobe.

The narrow, old desk and boxes containing bandages she had bought because of her burns.

The blanket her mother was said to have mended by sewing before she passed away.

Yuki skillfully shook off the moisture in her hair with flame magic and carefully wrapped herself in the blanket and lay down.

She closed her eyes while smelling the faint scent of her mother coming from the stuffed animals placed beside her pillow.

'Ah…'

If this is a dream, please don't let me wake up.

"…"

But Yuki couldn't fall asleep right away. She took out her red Glass Star that she had habitually kept in sight even while bathing.

"…There really is only one light left."

The star that had grown brighter as she fought repeatedly and

accumulated magical power, shining like the sun just before the final trial, was now emitting a shabby light. It had become a born 1-star with only one light, not three brilliant lights.

“I came back… but something was strange…”

While she was busy with the joy of meeting her father, she was startled to see bloomed magical girls walking on the streets. Of course, for Yuki, bloomed magical girls had only appeared after the war in 2012.

“All the magical girls in Japan were cruel, trapped in [War]’s world of struggle…”

They had no hesitation in killing each other.

They killed ordinary people without blinking an eye for a single meal.

Stealing and being stolen from had become everyday life…

“…The magical girl of [Beginning].”

A girl appeared and shouted to the adults.

That magical girls bloom with dreams and should not be tainted by adults’ greed.

And so, accumulating numerous achievements, she led magical girls to hope.

Japan had early on become [Beginning]’s domain, not [War]’s.

For Yuki, this was a ‘history that hadn’t existed’ and a very awkward situation.

The regression magic she had performed intending to go back to age 9, her first life turning point, had for some reason brought her to the relatively recent day she decided to run away. And the Japan she returned to had become a world full of hope following the guidance of the magical girl of [Beginning].

“…I want to meet her. I wonder if I’ll have a chance.”

The cruel [War].

The indifferent [Revelation] and [Death].

[Plague] who couldn’t be reasoned with.

The four born 3-star magical girls who appeared after the second red broadcast were mechanical and scary, unlike other magical girls who showed some humanity. As if they were judges forcibly trying to continue ＜Magical Girl HAZARD＞ somehow…

-Why don’t you try to protect people!!

-Because that is not the role given to us.

They just nested in the north and south, somewhere in the sea, and Japan, and indifferently continued managing their domains.

No matter what the evil gods said, no matter how the demons came down, they didn’t care if it wasn’t their domain.

But [Beginning] was different.

Even though it was a past she didn’t know, sincerity could be felt in her voice talking about dreams and hope on the broadcast. Even though she was just a shabby born 1-star magical girl, she wanted to meet her and help create a better future.

She wanted to explain the achievements of her companions who had disappeared under the flame of regression and tell her about the direction we should go.

She wanted to hold her hand and tell her how great what she had accomplished was.

“I wonder if she’ll believe me if I ramble about having a future that only I know.”

A faint hope that she could become a companion who could face that nightmarish future together, along with the fear of an ‘unknown

past'.

"A place… where it's okay… for me to exist…"

Thinking it would be nice if the magical girl of [Beginning] was as kind as she appeared in the debutante broadcast, Yuki gradually fell asleep.

Over Yuki's Glass Star as she fell asleep, the notice for the <1st Magical Girl Friendly Mock Battle Tournament> sent from the Walpurgis Grand Council quietly appeared.

* * *

Ichika was depressed.

"Haah… it's completely ruined."

While habitually fiddling with her smartphone watching a Hong Kong martial arts movie while using the public restroom, she absent-mindedly placed her smartphone on top of the toilet tank as she was about to finish up and leave…

Splash

"Eh?!"

Ichika turned around in shock at the sound she shouldn't have heard.

The top of the old public toilet's tank had broken, and the smartphone was sinking below the water surface.

"No!!! No!!! Aaaaahhhh!!!"

Splash

She hurriedly fished out the smartphone and anxiously touched it, but the screen was crackling.

If she had quickly turned off the power and rushed to the service center, there might have been a glimmer of hope left, but Ichika, in a panic, clicked the power button several times, turning it on and off…

“…”

Dejected by the incredibly absurd event, she quietly lay down at home.

She thought about trying to make one with magic from the Glass Star store, but most electronic devices made that way disappeared quickly. Deciding to quit such useless acts, she quietly made plans to increase her part-time jobs.

“Huh? Boss? Are you tired of Hong Kong movies now?”

Even when Kyoko, who had returned home after finishing her cafe job in the evening, asked cheerfully, she didn’t respond and just lay there quietly. Kyoko went ahead and prepared dinner.

Slurp

Slurp

After eating udon together, Ichika did the dishes and lay down again.

“Hm? Boss? Aren’t you going out on patrol today?”

“…”

…Sometimes she thought that even Tokyo’s thugs should have room to breathe.

Come to think of it, the legend of the Green Vigilante didn’t seem like it would disappear just by not going out for one day.

Right.

Just for today, her fists weren’t itching.

Kyoko looked at Ichika strangely and said:

“Oh, the Sato kid said to come play in the Garden plaza, so I’ll be going!”

“…”

Whoosh

Ichika didn't even glance at Kyoko who disappeared with a bright light from a corner of the room, and was estimating which shift she should work to earn money quickly when:

Pop

"Huh?"

Small text was gradually appearing over Ichika's green Glass Star.

＜1st Magical Girl Friendly Mock Battle Tournament＞

Decided by the Walpurgis Grand Council to help magical girls apply their abilities in situations like real combat to prepare for dangerous situations…

In the arena made of [Beginning]'s illusion barrier, magical girls can engage in mock battles under conditions completely identical to reality without suffering damage…

We intend to hold open mock battles for all magical girls belonging to each domain…

Registration is completed immediately upon expressing intent through the Glass Star, and withdrawal is possible at any time…

Matches of magical girls who pass preliminaries in each of the 4 sections and advance to the main tournament will be broadcast live…

[Higher ranking magical girls will receive prizes such as smartphones, home appliances, clothing, cosmetics, etc. sponsored by various companies…]

"Smartphone?"

Smartphone.

The prize is a smartphone.

"I'm in!!!"

Ichika repeatedly tapped her green Glass Star to express her intent to participate and got up.

“…I guess I really shouldn’t skip patrol even for a day! Hahahahaha!”

[Transform!]

Ichika, who had regained her energy, ran out into Tokyo’s night streets, her green sailor uniform fluttering.

“Wait for me, smartphone!! Hahahahaha!!!”

Chapter 53 : The Flame Reignites

Even after the announcement of the friendly tournament, born 1-star magical girls in Japan were hesitant to participate.

“Eh, fighting is a bit…”

“Just working in the relief corps is enough, isn’t it?”

“Do we really need to go that far when [Beginning] is protecting us?”

“I don’t like violent things!”

Still, girls who couldn’t overcome their curiosity went to visit the arena.

The several arenas built in the Garden were marble-floored spaces above a rose garden. Thick magical power was flowing through the outer walls surrounding the 100-meter open space, and as soon as they entered, their Glass Stars vibrated.

Woong

“Whoa?! Wh-what’s this?”

“Is this the illusion barrier they were talking about?”

“Then… maybe we can go a little wild.”

Crack!

Thud!

Whoosh!

The girls who entered the arena to test it out played by summoning creatures to rampage or spreading release magic around.

Boom!

Rumble!

“Ahaha! It feels refreshing somehow!”

“Yeah! We can’t play like this outside!”

“Smash it, smash it!!”

“Hahahaha!”

After unleashing their abilities for a while, the beautiful marble floor was completely cracked and all the roses were either burned or overturned.

As the girls who felt they had done something wrong yet refreshed snuck out, their Glass Stars vibrated again and the arena was restored.

Woong

The entire scene changed and the girls returned to how they were before entering the arena.

“This is more fun than I thought…”

“Shall we do it again?”

Seeing this, the magical girls used the place to relieve stress by playing pranks for days instead of doing the training they were supposed to.

It was just unleashing magic to the limit and making a fuss, but most magical girls were satisfied with that much.

Perceptions began to change little by little when foreign magical girls started coming in.

“White Wing 1st Platoon, ready to fire!”

“Fire!”

“Aah!”

Ratatatatat

Bang bang bang

The platoon leader of the 1st Platoon, the magical girl of [Shooting], aimed her unique weapon assault rifle at Park Saebyeok and gave orders to her platoon members.

“Cease fire!”

“Cease fire!”

Park Saebyeok, who was hit directly by the 1st Platoon’s fire without using psychic power, trembled while emitting pink energy all over her body.

“Ugh… aaaagh…”

She forcibly grabbed her shaking wrist to align it, and grasped her carotid artery that was spurting blood like a fountain, unable to cope with just the natural healing of her unique ability, and cast Heal.

“Aaagh!… Cough…”

That day, on her 5th attempt at sudden situation response training, Park Saebyeok succeeded in treating her own fatal wounds without immediately fainting from hemorrhagic shock.

Though not as much as Park Saebyeok, who was a born 2-star, the 1st Platoon members conducted sudden situation response training in the arena every day.

The platoon members lined up in a row were shot in the shoulder or thigh by their designated shooters without protecting themselves with psychic power.

Bang bang bang bang bang!

“Kyaaaaaaah!!!”

“Ugh… aaaagh…”

“Believe! The pain is real but you won’t die! Get a grip! You can survive if you use your healing ability!”

Under Park Saebyeok’s encouragement, the White Wing unit members cast healing abilities towards the areas where they felt burning pain while crying. And they confirmed the bullets naturally being pushed out from places that weren’t completely penetrated.

Clink

“Huuu… huff, huff!”

“Uuugh…”

Some members vomited from the unbearable pain or wet themselves from shock, but they gained a streak of pride and confidence in the repeated training before fear could set in.

‘If it’s now, we could fight [Bombing] again…!’

Though [Bombing] was already dead, the 1st Platoon, who harbored memories of being helplessly defeated by the terrorist who attacked South Korea while bearing the name of magical girls, especially gritted their teeth and conducted combat training.

Like real combat.

They adapted by shooting and stabbing each other with swords every day.

Sometimes they struggled in unreasonable situations surrounded by many.

Sometimes they poked at each other’s weaknesses and attacked with telekinesis in unarmed confrontations.

Sometimes they rushed at each other covered in blood while inflicting fatal wounds.

Sometimes blindfolded, sometimes with both hands tied…

So that they could protect and heal people in any combat situation and pain.

As painfully as possible so that their sense of crisis wouldn't dull, because even a single mistake couldn't be tolerated in real combat.

Bang bang bang

"Aaaaah! I've been shot many times by guns!!"

Stab

"This much won't kill me!!"

Following the gravitational pull of fate led by Park Saebyeok's pink star, the girls became warriors.

It was cruel training that would have made their families or friends faint if they saw, but that day's fight made it impossible for them to remain immature.

The star that responded to their will was quietly whispering.

That the threat was not over yet.

Clang!

Chink!

The born 1-star magical girl of [Penetration] from France faced her opponent with a cold expression, holding her rapier.

The born 2-star magical girl of [Heavy Armor] from Germany also faced her opponent in a stance ready to respond at any time.

"…"

"…"

Words were unnecessary for the two girls from the same relief group.

Clang!

They hadn't let go of their unique weapons, which they hadn't taken out while their friends were alive, for days.

No one could protect them.

Not soldiers, not police, not politicians, not religious people.

Everyone was helplessly defeated by the terrorists.

Boom!

[Heavy Armor] deflected the rapier with her shield wrapped in psychic power and charged forward, becoming a living tank.

Crack

[Penetration] was hit by that charge, crushed and sent flying into the rose garden.

Woong

With the vibration of the star, everything returned, and they were back in their confrontation stance.

"27 matches, 25 losses…"

"Your attacks are getting sharper. Especially when you attack the neck and shoulders, it's hard to respond."

"The 2 wins were just you letting me win by taking the hits."

Grip

"It's still impossible for me to beat you even a little."

The eyes of the magical girl of [Penetration], gripping her rapier as if it would break, were still coldly burning.

[Heavy Armor], confirming her friend's gaze, raised her shield again and took her stance.

“Come!!”

Clang!

The two Chinese magical girls caught their breath as they saw their weapons entangle.

Whoosh!

“…!”

Clang clang clang

The two girls who were fighting each other responded by spreading psychic power like a curtain to the flying daggers that came from somewhere.

“Li Na…!”

The born 1-star magical girl of [Dagger] from China, who appeared from the shadows under the garden, spoke while looking at the two fighting girls.

“It was you who allowed me to do sneak attacks, you haven’t changed your mind already, have you?”

“No, it was appropriate.”

“Then is it three of us now? Li Na, are you also going to say you can’t do it unless it’s a sneak attack?”

“No. I’m going to fight head-on now too.”

Li Na threw a handful of long needles at the two girls, and the three girls fought fiercely, unleashing their most fatal attacks on each other.

Slash!

Clang!

Seeing people die, pierced by flying black swords, the girls chose to burn their hearts with anger rather than despair.

Clang!

Clang!

They quietly burned the anger towards [Sword] that grew in their hearts and honed themselves. So that even if they were feeble blades now, they could one day become daggers that would fly to pierce [Sword]'s heart.

"…"

The Japanese magical girls watched those girls in silence. Pondering the questions that arose in their minds.

Why?

For what reason?

You've already entered the safe embrace of [Beginning], haven't you?

Most ordinary girls could only shudder at their desperate training, but magical girls who had bloomed strong powers asked serious questions about their own strength.

"What did we become strong for?"

What is the reason the magical girl of [Beginning], who even adults and nations are flustered by, provided us with this space? What did those girls training so fiercely see?

"…"

Could we also realize it if we train as fiercely as them?

From the next day, among the Japanese magical girls coming to the arena, the number of those entering with serious eyes rather than playful smiles increased.

And so several more days passed.

On the day of the tournament, a girl with a red ribbon on a white dress entered the arena with a determined expression.

Bloomed born 1-star magical girl of [Flame]

Shikishima Yuki

“This is… [Beginning]’s domain…”

Because [War]’s domain was always full of endless anger and fighting, the sounds and sights felt in the space unfolding now were similar.

“No, it’s different.”

Although they were still inexperienced girls who had just started to take fighting seriously, what shone in their eyes was not madness but will. The resolve of girls that should have started next year with the fight between the Alliance and Flag.

“[Beginning] is different from [War].”

Yuki felt the will to protect and raise magical girls in the right direction in [Beginning]’s domain. She felt her gentle heart.

Thump

Thumplp

Yuki’s heart pounded as it felt this.

“I’m not alone anymore.”

The magical girl who wanted to lead everyone from this despair to the path of hope was no longer just Yuki.

The unfamiliar girl who came from the changed past was correctly guiding the world that should have fallen into despair.

Though they had never met even once, she was helping Yuki’s new beginning with kinder hands than anyone else.

Even the companions who fought together in the future only fought against destruction in the end because they wanted to protect what they desired.

Perhaps someone who could truly understand and help Yuki…

“…I want to meet the magical girl of [Beginning].”

Yuki looked into her red Glass Star.

＜1st Magical Girl Friendly Mock Battle Tournament＞

Only bloomed magical girls showed a meaningful participation rate. Therefore, for fairness, even among bloomed magical girls, 1-stars and 2-stars were divided and organized separately.

The tournament taking place over 3 days proceeded quickly with a 10-minute time limit per match, and the last day was scheduled to conclude with the 2-star girls’ tournament.

The number of bloomed 1-star participants was 64, including Yuki.

The number of bloomed 2-star participants was 7.

Originally, one person would advance with a bye in the 2-star tournament, but…

“I must catch [Beginning]’s eye.”

Yuki shyly smiled while thinking of a plan to turn the tournament upside down.

“…Come watch me, magical girl of [Beginning].”

Whoosh

Even if all that remained in her hand was just a tiny spark.

Her flame was a flame that had returned alive from the end of the world.

Chapter 54 : The Flame Reignites

Wooooaaahhhh!!!

“At this moment! As I said, the magical girl of [Barrier] has deployed her unique ability to trap her opponent!”

“If she moves the walls to physically crush her opponent like this, it’s too much for a born 1-star!”

Rumble

With a huge sound, rectangular stone walls about 5 meters in size appeared and completely trapped the opponent.

Thud thud thud thud

New barriers were stacked on top, forming a large square stone block, and then thrown towards the trapped opponent.

It was a desperate situation like dropping an iron ball on a mouse trapped in a box.

The audience watching through Glass Stars and the internet held their breath in worry and anticipation of the brutal scene about to unfold. Since the tournament began, they had been startled by the surprisingly vivid battles, but as they gradually got used to the intensity of the fights, the magical girls of [Reporting] and [Eloquence] continued their reactions at the top of their lungs.

‘No matter what, her back is way too exposed…!’

The weakness of fortification-type magical girls was that they became fixated on moving the surrounding terrain themselves, creating blind

spots. They often forgot the obvious fact that opponents could move three-dimensionally through space teleportation, even during war, and were frequently ambushed.

Magical girls are not bound by space.

Trying to dominate the battlefield through space is a method used against demons or ordinary people.

Whoosh

Whoosh

[Flame] used consecutive teleportations in an instant to target [Barrier]'s back. [Barrier] turned around with a startled expression, but…

"Aaah!! [Flame] has appeared behind [Barrier]!"

"The magical girl of [Flame]!! She slashes the magical girl of [Barrier] in one strike with a sword made of flames!"

"[Barrier], who had toyed with all her opponents up to the Round of 16, has been neutralized by a single attack!"

"An unbelievable ultra-high-speed 3 consecutive wins!! Advancing to the quarterfinals!! The magical girl of [Flame]!! A strong candidate to win the 1-star division!!"

Woong

The star vibrated and the two magical girls returned to their original positions.

The magical girl of [Barrier] from China had a dumbfounded expression, and Yuki chuckled seeing that.

It had been so long since she had seen a magical girl with such an innocent expression…

Yuki offered a handshake and quietly spoke with her face red from embarrassment. Inside the arena, Laura had cast [Unity]'s magic, so

they were not bound by language.

“In-instead of trapping the opponent… I think it would be better to create the most advantageous place for yourself and lure them in.”

“Advantageous place…?”

“Yes… for example, if you had irregularly floated barriers… and changed positions by teleporting from behind… hiding and throwing stones, it would have been much harder…”

“Ah… oh my… I didn’t think of that… thank you.”

The magical girl of [Barrier] shook her head and expressed her gratitude with a dejected face before leaving the arena.

Wooooaaahhhh!

[Flame]!

[Flame]!

[Flame]!

‘Aaaaaahhh…’

Even for Yuki, who had experienced countless battles, being the center of attention for so many people was not something she was used to. Yuki covered her completely red face with both hands and fled to the waiting area.

Whoosh

“Phew…”

Yuki crouched down in the quiet garden called the waiting area and clutched her slender chest.

Thump thump thump thump

Her heart, which hadn’t been overly nervous even when fighting giant demons, was pounding, and her ears and face felt like they would explode like a volcano.

She just couldn't get used to this gently changed world.

She had just won because she knew things from fighting more than others, but every time she saw the praise pouring in from all over the internet and social media, she wanted to hide in a mouse hole.

Glance

Even so, Yuki took out her smartphone and sneakily checked the praise for herself, clutching her chest.

Thump thump thump thump

In her first match, when the summoning-type magical girl surrounded Yuki with summoned creatures. She quickly knocked down and burned two summoned creatures to create a small trench, then defeated them one by one as they jumped in.

'Summoned creatures can be used not only as a means of attack but also as combat terrain…!'

In her second match, when the emission-type magical girl was firing her powerful energy. Yuki condensed flames into small swords to cut through or accurately deflected the impact points with curtains while approaching.

'If it's the same emission type, it's more efficient to fight by weaponizing energy!'

While other magical girls advanced by fighting nail-biting battles that filled the full 10 minutes, the audience preferred the coverage of Yuki's matches, where she won refreshingly with bold strategies that struck at the core.

[The magical girl of Flame is amazing! We might be disappointed watching the 2-star tournament instead?]

[I think I'm going to become a total fan…]

[Her face that looks like a small animal, her swaying short hair, the red ribbon tied only on the right side, her eyes that turn red when fighting, everything is cute!!!]

[A hero of the 1-star world has appeared!]

[Why are all the real names of the participating magical girls hidden!!]

[Flame! Flame! Flame! Flame!]

[Someone working at the council just told me that they're getting bombarded with requests to reveal Flame's real name.]

Tremble tremble

"Is it okay for me to receive so much praise…"

After being despised since she was 9 years old when she got her burns, and her heart gradually turning gray as she fought until the moment of destruction, Yuki felt like she would cry from emotion as her father's love, [Beginning]'s kindness, and people's praise flowed into her heart.

Yuki couldn't come to her senses due to the goodwill shining in full color.

If [Beginning] were to see her and say she was wonderful while taking her hand, she felt like she would collapse right there.

The warm praise was breaking her down more than the intense killing intent of powerful demons and plunderers.

Wipe wipe

Yuki wiped her eyes with the red ribbon wrapped around her right hand, and left the garden looking forward to tomorrow's main tournament while reminding herself of her plan to meet [Beginning].

* * *

Among the Japanese born 2-star magical girls who had recently bloomed rapidly, an incredible one had appeared.

Bloomed born 2-star magical girl of [Transfer].

She was a magical girl who had bloomed the ability to bestow long-distance teleportation magic that magical girls could use on objects above a certain size.

Surprised by this amazing news, companies and headhunters from various countries contacted Sumire begging to meet her just once. However, [Transfer] herself expressed that she didn't want to use this power for money.

'…Respecting the magical girl's own wishes, I stayed up all night refusing.'

I too held my wildly beating heart and had an urgent meeting with Sumire in the Garden, and put on the Grand Council agenda the installation of [Transfer]'s ability in each country's self-governing body domains and buildings.

Even in the original work, they relied on physical means of transportation except for born 3-stars who could freely enter and leave their own domains.

'This is really revolutionary…!'

In an emergency Grand Council meeting attended by [Transfer], Sumire, Kang Dorim, Li Meilin, Laura, and myself, we agreed to install 5 gates each in the buildings and domains of each country's magical girl self-governing bodies.

"Then, regarding the management of entry and exit for the warp gates of each self-governing body…"

Sumire said while carefully looking at me.

"According to the Magical Girl Self-Governing Body Treaty proposed by each country's leaders, let's have each self-governing body autonomously judge visits to countries belonging to the Grand Council for service or support purposes."

The exchange of magical girls through the installation of [Transfer]'s warp gates.

Judging and allowing that would be up to each country's magical girl

self-governing bodies.

“…”

I looked around nervously, feeling like I was throwing too heavy a responsibility on the self-governing bodies, but as soon as we sounded out opinions from each country’s leaders, they expressed their welcome.

Even Japan’s major corporations led by Fujimoto and state institutions expressed their welcome to the fact that magical girls they had privately connected with could freely come and go.

“The recent influence of friendly match training has also greatly reduced the minor disturbances caused by magical girls.”

“Miss Fujimoto, is the friendly match progressing well?”

“Yes, it’s the first day but it’s proceeding without any problems. We stayed up all night discussing sponsorships with companies and chose the most uncontroversial prizes.”

“…”

Is she complaining to me that there’s too much work…?

But it’s true that I irresponsibly dumped work on her and left, so I decided to let it go.

Glance

It wasn’t noticeable due to Sumire’s sophisticated appearance and makeup. But the dark circles under her eyes were gradually getting darker.

‘Come to think of it, Hana-chan said she wouldn’t participate in the friendly match.’

Sato Hana had somehow reached the point of openly talking about magical girl activities with her parents.

Stories about the yellow Flash Girl who helped people in trouble

while zipping around Tokyo had already spread as much as they could through social media like Witch Talk.

The Sato couple were proud of their daughter and were sharing the miracle they had received with others by going on weekend volunteer activities instead of weekend walks.

-Mom and Dad said they're happy helping others too!

Hehe

-So I'm sorry to Hikari-chan who prepared, but I don't think I can participate in the tournament!

As soon as I heard the news of Sato Hana's non-participation, I completely lost interest in the born 1-star tournament.

Rather, I was only praying that the green magical girl who shamelessly participated in the born 2-star tournament would just take it easy.

'…Shameless indeed.'

I glared at Ichika, who had expressed her intention to participate, with narrowed eyes.

-What? Leader? Why are you looking at me like that? Why? Aren't I a magical girl? Hm?

Heh… heheng…

The smile of that girl, who seemed embarrassed even by her own thoughts, came to mind again.

Since it was clear that she would win the 2-star division anyway, I turned my attention back to discussing the locations and installation methods for the 40 warp gates we were about to set up.

"If it's this kind of structure, I think I can do it with my cyberbrain world?"

Kang Dorim, who had received the scale and rough structure of the

warp gate framework required by [Transfer], answered readily.

“Making them isn’t the problem, but who’s going to carry and distribute them is the issue. We’re talking about 40 door-sized objects here.”

“Since I’m the only one who can go through all the domains, I’ll do it. The magical girl self-governing bodies in each country can receive them through the domain and install them, right?”

“You’ll do it personally, [Beginning]? Then we’re grateful, we’ll have people standing by on our end too.”

Laura answered with a gentle smile.

“Eh? The King will do it personally? But the dignity…”

Sumire looked at me with surprised eyes and spoke hesitantly.

“If dignity is that important, please uphold my dignity too, Madam Chairwoman…”

Hiing

Li Meilin looked at Kang Dorim and Sumire, who usually treated her roughly, with a hurt expression, twisting her shoulders and naturally exposing her nape.

“Oh, just stay still for a bit.”

Fwip

“Ugh?!”

When Kang Dorim threw a paper airplane, Li Meilin hid under the table. Laura quietly laughed seeing that.

The magical girl of [Transfer] was also surprised by the unexpectedly cheerful atmosphere of the Grand Council and laughed along.

“Then let’s begin now.”

Chapter 55 : The Flame Reignites

“Phew… my heart is still pounding…”

Yuki, who had returned home, sighed in the bathtub after eating dinner and entering the bath.

Thump thump

The shower of praise she had received earlier was still jumbling her ears and mind.

Even when she defeated major demon-class beings called ‘Trials’ one by one, all that came back was despair-filled sighs and dwindling numbers of people…

[Flame]!

[Flame]!

[Flame]!

Even when she tried to close her eyes and gather her thoughts, the happy reality contrasting with the sad future was so sweet that she felt like she would lose her way. She felt like she was returning from a magical girl who fought against trials to a small, shabby girl enchanted by sweet whispers.

“Hup!”

Bubble bubble

“Pwah!”

To gather her thoughts, she put her head underwater in the warm

bathtub.

But it only made her mouth bitter as bath salts entered it.

Ptoo ptoo

“Ugh… I’m dizzy.”

There was no way Yuki, the magical girl of [Flame], would feel dizzy from the warmth of a bathtub. She was just at a loss, unable to adapt to the attention and cheers she was receiving for the first time in her life.

Holding her dizzy head and completely shaking off the moisture through flame magic, Yuki changed into the rabbit pajamas she had always longed for in the future and flopped down on her bed.

Click

Then she took out her smartphone and played the broadcasts and quotes of [Beginning] that she had been watching continuously since her regression.

It had become Yuki’s habit to replay what she had said just before going to sleep every time.

Precious dream.

[…They too are just ordinary girls who can shine on their own…]

[What is your dream, your true happiness?]

[I will awaken the stars hidden in darkness with dreams.]

Shining hope.

[Girls born under the star that guides others with dreams, be protected and respected under eternal dreams and fate.]

[Hope that leads others will become the virtue of this land!]

Sniff

Yuki clutched her smartphone pitifully and cried.

She was originally prone to tears, but she was acutely realizing that warmth makes people cry easily.

“Yes… I wanted to hear these words from someone…”

Even when she heard [War]’s declaration at the Alliance shelter in Shinjuku intersection.

Even when she headed to [Death]’s domain in the north seeking a glimmer of hope after confirming her father’s death.

Even when she had a close fight with the Scavenger [Bombing] who attacked ordinary people and magical girls in Russia.

Even when she fought together with magical girls who survived among demons.

Even when she was timid and only avoided fights, she wanted hope.

That someday we would all be okay.

But no one believed.

Even though she fought transcending even death with the power of [Resurrection], no one listened.

And she failed.

But only the girl who came from an unfamiliar past affirmed her words.

“I want to meet you, to meet you and… say I want to fight together.”

I want to tell you.

[Beginning]

Even though she had failed once, if she could fight together with her who shines as brilliantly as her alias, she felt she wouldn’t be afraid of the future full of despair.

This time, she felt like she could protect everyone and move towards a hopeful future.

“I want to meet you.”

I want to meet you.

Please find me.

* * *

Wooooaaahhhh!!

The final match has finally arrived, and the arena was filled with cheers.

“[Flame]!! She avoided [Penetration]’s attack in one breath!!”

“[Flame] literally rushes in like a flame and subdues her opponent in one go!!”

“The arena is now filled with flames!!”

Tok!

Tok!

Tok!

“Ugh?! My vision?!”

Chloé, the magical girl of [Penetration] from France, who had gained confidence in her skills through intense training with her friend, was flustered.

‘Wasn’t it supposed to be solved by approaching instantly before emission-types shoot projectiles?!’

Small flames scattered here and there in the air reacted to her movements and exploded, and the slight heat wave carried by those explosions gradually accumulated, drying her eyes.

“My, my eyes… I can’t see…?!”

Her accurate and fast attacks were praised even by the 2-star [Heavy Armor], but they became useless as her vision blurred due to the small flames exploding in front of her eyes.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

With her eyes half-closed, she was barely defending against the endlessly rushing flame swords, feeling only the air pressure.

Whoosh!

“Where is she?!”

Suddenly, [Flame] who had distanced herself completely disappeared from view.

When [Penetration] turned her head, she saw her opponent creating a bow of flames far away, her white dress fluttering…

Stab!

An arrow made of a stream of flames pierced Chloé’s brow.

“The match!! It’s over!! An ingenious strategy of creating various weapons from elements!!”

“The strategy used by [Flame] is causing a great sensation among emission-type magical girls who were considered the weakest for only being able to fire energy!!”

“The magical girl of [Flame]!! She has beaten strong contenders for the championship like [Dagger] and [Shooting], and finally defeated [Penetration] in the finals to win!!”

“The winner of the born 1-star division in the 1st Magical Girl Friendly Mock Battle is [Flame]!! The magical girl of [Flame]!!”

Wooooaaahhhh!!!

[Flame]!!

[Flame]!!

[Flame]!!

The magical girl of [Reporting], who had appropriately heated up the audience with endlessly rising tension, nodded to the magical girl of [Eloquence] sitting next to her, then entered the arena to hear the winner's interview.

The magical girl of [Reporting], who was entering with small steps holding a box containing the prize and a microphone, hesitated in surprise at the heat of the arena felt on her face.

Hot.

'Wow… it's so hot, they fought like this in a place like this?'

It was the first time the magical girl of [Reporting], who had only watched from the commentary seat until now, had actually entered the arena.

In the middle of the arena, shimmering with traces of fierce battle and heat, stood the magical girl of [Flame] resolutely.

Gulp

[Reporting] carefully raised the microphone to her and said:

"Um, would it be okay to ask the winner, the magical girl of [Flame], for a few words?"

Nod

Yuki was just nervous about what she was going to say and couldn't answer because she was swallowing, but in the eyes of [Reporting] and the watching audience, it looked like the dignity of a skilled person.

"She's cute… but cool."

"[Flame]… you're my favorite magical girl from now on!"

"The magical girl of [Flame]!"

The audience was charmed by this strange girl who had a curious coexistence of cuteness and dignity, like a red hamster that had trained martial arts for 100 years.

The magical girl of [Flame] opened her mouth and began to speak her thoughts.

“A-all the born 1-star magical girls practiced seriously and prepared well by understanding their own characteristics. I think that is… very… very meaningful.”

“I see! And…”

Swish

Suddenly, Yuki raised her right hand to the sky.

At this unexpected gesture, the magical girl of [Reporting] and all the spectators held their breath.

“Tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow?”

“I will take the remaining spot in the 2-star magical girls’ tournament.”

“…”

“…”

A moment of silence.

And then euphoria.

Wooooaaahhhh!!!

Countless born 1-star girls cheered.

A girl challenging with skill alone, transcending even the light considered an absolute difference in power.

The boldness to challenge the strongest magical girls with just one

feeble light like us.

That day, all spectators and born 1-star magical girls simply went wild, thrilled at the birth of a new legend.

Wooooaaahhhh!!!

[Flame]!!

[Flame]!!

[Flame]!!

“Hnng, she’s got guts! I like it!”

Ichika, the magical girl of [Freedom], grinned and clapped her hands.

“Hmm…”

Himari, the magical girl of [Nursing], watched with interest through her golden eyes.

“Ooh! Passion! It’s passion!”

[Martial Arts], active in Hokkaido, had eyes sparkling brightly.

“Hahaha!! The best!! This tournament is really the best!!”

[Beast], active in Kyushu, literally roared.

“…”

Kaede, an unbloomed magical girl, didn’t show particular interest in Yuki.

“She’s overflowing with spirit. That’s what it takes to beat Chloé.”

Ella, the magical girl of [Heavy Armor] from Germany, smiled in acknowledgment of the spirit emanating from the one who beat her friend.

“Eeh?! But!! I had a bye!! Inspector Yamashita!! What should we do?!”

[It's difficult for me to answer that.]

Tsugumi, the magical girl of [Order] who luckily got a bye through the lottery, made a tearful face.

With the agreement of all 2-star magical girls, the remaining spot was taken by the born 1-star magical girl of [Flame].

And magical girls everywhere in the domain talked about how far this 1-star girl could go against the strong ones.

Ordinary people felt the signs of a legend being born beyond just watching beautiful girls fight, and burst into cheers.

A beautiful drama was being born in the midst of beautiful girls fighting.

They were excited that this tournament, which felt like a realistic simulation game, was the 'real story' of living, breathing beautiful girls.

Everyone interested in magical girl society was watching this Magical Girl Friendly Mock Battle.

Crash

And somewhere in the European domain, Hikari, the magical girl of [Deception] who was helping with the warp gate construction, dropped the water glass she was drinking from.

"Yu-Yuki?! Why?! Already??"

Chapter 56 : To Meet You

Whiiiiir!

“Ugh?!”

[Heavy Armor] hurriedly raised her shield but began to be caught in the recoil of the golden cutter.

Whiiiiir!

Crack crack

“It’s useless.”

The double-layered circular saw blades rotated at an incredible speed, making a chilling sound that seemed to make one’s head ring. [Heavy Armor] hurriedly discarded her shield and filled her armor with dense yellow starlight to deflect the saw blades.

Drrrrr

Ting!

[Aaaaaaah! My armor!]

As the plate armor flashed, vibrations occurred and the magical girl of [Heavy Armor]’s height increased rapidly.

“So you’re an enhancement type?”

[Nursing] flashed her golden eyes and deployed golden medical instruments from her unique weapon, a medical bag.

Chink chink

Golden hammers, chisels, awls, scalpels, syringes, and saws poured

out of the bag. And they floated around [Nursing], deploying a golden protective barrier.

Woooong!

When the armored giant, who had grown to 6 meters in size, stomped her foot, a huge sound like the world turning upside down occurred.

Booooom!!

Tap

Tap tap tap

[Nursing], who shot out from inside the dust cloud, elegantly held the hem of her long skirt and ran up [Heavy Armor]'s foot. Her legs, visible under the raised white skirt, were moving at an incredible speed.

[Damn it! Get off!]

Along with the giant's terrifyingly resounding voice, a huge gauntlet chased after [Nursing] to grab her.

Slash slash slash

But thousands of golden surgical tools floating around [Nursing] began to move and disassemble the armor.

Crack

Crack

Crack

Crack

[Get off!]

Woooong!

Power was released from [Heavy Armor]'s huge body along with a dazzling light. The surgical tools that had been scraping the armor

fell off in droves.

[Where are you…?!]

[Heavy Armor] lost sight of [Nursing], who had been climbing up her body, as she was busy shaking off the surgical tools.

Whiiiiir!

Responding to the sound, she looked up to see [Nursing] descending from the air, elegantly swirling her skirt hem and holding a golden chainsaw.

She inserted the golden chainsaw deep into the gap of the helmet's faceplate and turned it.

Whiiiiiiiiir!

Kagagagagagak!

Splat

* * *

Boom

With the sound of a drum, a grizzly bear fell bleeding.

"Ooh! Such passionate summoned beasts!"

[Martial Arts], who had slaughtered to the point that her dyed blonde hair was stained red with the beasts' blood, lightly dusted off her fists and charged at [Beast].

"It's not over yet!"

The magical girl of [Beast], wearing a bear skin, roared with glowing eyes.

Awoooooo!

When a storm of fallen leaves flew in from somewhere, the surrounding 50-meter radius was filled with wolves, bears, and

leopards.

[Beast], riding on an autumn leaf-colored lion, shouted with flashing eyes:

“It’s hunting time!”

Awoooooo!

Woof woof

Groooooowl!

All [Martial Arts] could see in front of her were teeth, teeth, and more teeth. Dozens of beasts rushing in with their mouths wide open and eyes glowing.

The pure will unique to animals.

Grin

“Now this is passion!”

[Martial Arts], emitting a light blue light, swung her hands and feet so fast they were invisible, her dogi fluttering.

Whoosh

Bang

What burst forth from her hands and feet were crude and primal, but also primal in the killing intent contained within, punches and kicks. What remained where her fists extended were only traces of pure destruction.

One punch shattered a wolf’s face.

One kick tore open a bear’s belly.

One wind strike broke a leopard’s claws.

Boom!

Crack!

Finally, even the ambush of boar tusks, her hidden trump card, was blocked.

“This isn’t enough! You need to burn with passion!”

“Ugh?!”

The clear-eyed maniac wrapped in light blue light shot towards the final beast, the lion, and the girl.

“Passion!!”

* * *

Beep!

Rustle rustle

With one blow of [Order]’s whistle, the entire space was covered in a maze-like pattern of yellow police lines. And as the floor protruded, it blocked all the paths [Flame] wanted to advance on.

Bang!

When [Order] fired a blank into the sky, dozens of searchlights floating in the air all shot towards [Flame] at once, interfering with her vision.

“From now on, this is my investigation area!”

Swish

Swish

[Order] moved between the numerous obstacles using teleportation and rolling, making it impossible for [Flame] to pinpoint her location.

‘This level of trap is…’

[Flame] calmly closed her eyes and created weak flame waves around

her while firing arrows into the sky.

Swoosh!

Swoosh!

Clang!

Clang!

[Flame] fired volleys of over 10 arrows at once towards the front where her vision was facing.

Thud thud thud

Clang!

The searchlights quickly diminished as their persistent pursuit to ruin her vision actually helped pinpoint their location.

‘Paralyzing vision is a prelude to ambush.’

…And behind!

Bang bang bang bang bang bang

Swoosh!

Feeling the heat colliding with [Order]’s body that had suddenly approached from behind, [Flame] repeatedly teleported left and right while opening her eyes and firing.

“Ugh…?!”

[Order], who hadn’t considered that she had come to where the searchlights were shining due to her obsession with ambush, frowned and failed to hit with her gun, retreating again.

Click.

The sound of reloading.

[Flame] immediately teleported towards the direction she felt the

sound coming from. But the one holding the gun was a doppelganger resembling a male police officer.

A trap.

“Inspector Yamashitas!! Open fire!!”

Bang bang bang bang bang bang

Two doppelgangers broke cover and stood up, firing at [Flame].

Born 2-star level doppelgangers can’t show sophisticated movements unless they’re summoning types.

[Flame] didn’t panic and simply bounced her red shoes to fire flames, escaping with a backstep.

Bang bang bang

Thud!

Thump

Thud!

Thump

[Flame], who calmly achieved one-shot-one-kill amidst the shower of bullets going astray, immediately drew out her flame sword and twisted her body.

Bang bang bang bang bang bang

All the bullets missed through the naturally twisted body.

“Ugh, missed again…?!”

When a space distortion type magical girl spreads doppelgangers, it’s to guide attention.

What she wants is the second ambush.

And [Flame] had intentionally used a backstep towards a structure

good for cover.

“I can’t lose!!”

“Ugh?!”

The red glowing eyes of [Flame] rushing in with her flame sword and the navy blue glowing eyes of [Order] aiming her gun barrel intersected.

* * *

“Huff… huff…”

Kaede’s men’s suit jacket was torn and her left arm was broken. All the poisons, hidden weapons, and shurikens she had prepared so far were crumpled or missed, discarded on the floor.

This was the limit of an unbloomed magical girl.

No matter how many hundreds of hidden weapons and poisons she prepared, they bounced off the unreasonable starlight.

“…”

Ichika wasn’t teasing like before, but quietly staring at Kaede with burning eyes.

“…I lost again. Kill me.”

Kaede closed her eyes as if she had already accepted the outcome.

In this illusory space where life and death are meaningless anyway.

She accepted the result cleanly.

This sticky emotion in her chest was one she couldn’t resolve.

To quietly return to the young lady…

“…Why did you want to fight me?”

“What?”

Kaede opened her eyes and looked at Ichika.

“For Fujimoto’s sake? No. You came here now wanting to kill me, even if it’s fake, of your own will. Right?”

“…Stop talking nonsense and kill me.”

“Stand up.”

Ichika spoke while burning her green eyes.

She had to fulfill her duty as an opponent to one who came seeking revenge against her.

I am your opponent.

A wall you must overcome.

“Stand up of your own will.”

Her own will.

Hearing those words, Kaede’s entire past life flashed through her mind.

From being a nameless orphan until receiving the name Kaede, it was nothing but training.

Meaningless training.

A puppet.

The day Master Fujimoto gave her a name.

-From now on, your name is Kaede.

From that day on, Kaede’s life of meaningless training was defined by loyalty.

‘It had to be that way…’

After fulfilling her duty as a touchstone in her first mission and being defeated, she ended up serving the young lady instead of Fujimoto.

Still, Kaede didn't feel too bad about it.

Why?

Why.

Why did the defeat by the person in front of her hurt more than the training she had devoted her whole life to and being called a 'ninja abandoned by Fujimoto'?

The first human she met who was in a similar situation to herself.

"I…"

Creak

Ignoring her broken bones, Kaede stood up.

"I…!"

What was in my heart.

"I wanted to be like you…!"

Why are you so free when you were also a nameless child like me?

Why am I so shabby when I was also a nameless child like you?

We're both magical girls!! Why am I!!

"I wanted to be like you!! I was jealous!! How could you be so strong and free on your own when we're both orphan bastards!!"

The first true feelings Kaede revealed.

And responding to her true feelings, a dark green star vibrated.

What appeared wrapped in dark green light was…

"Ughh, this really pisses me off."

"…"

A sailor uniform exactly the same as Ichika's.

Unlike Ichika's white-based outfit, a dark green muffler covered the black sailor uniform.

Bloomed born 2-star magical girl of [Jealousy]

Kaede

Kaede, who first realized her own desires by being jealous of someone, truly understood.

That the only emotion remaining in her heart, which she thought was an emotionless puppet, was not loyalty but jealousy.

Grrrr…

"Come."

"I will… defeat you!"

Ichika welcomed her in a green storm, with struggle engraved on her back.

Kaede rushed in, emitting dark green mist all over her body.

Bang!

Chapter 57 : To Meet You

On the last day of the friendly match, the audience and 1-star magical girls trembled.

It even surpassed the heightened expectations from the thrilling fights of the 1-star girls.

“…”

“…”

The fights of born 2-star magical girls were not just about fighting well, but the scale of their given abilities and light was different.

“This is… the power of 2-stars…”

It was a feast of enormous power that seemed hopeless even to imagine how to counter it.

“What kind of fight is [Flame] having?!”

The magical girls got goosebumps just from the fact that [Flame], a born 1-star, was fighting on equal terms with them.

The fight between a yellow giant and a golden angel.

A light blue warrior and dozens of beasts wrapped in fallen leaves.

Red flames traversing a navy blue fortress.

A green storm and dark green mist.

Ten minutes felt like an eternity, and they were so overwhelmed by the intensity emanating from them that they couldn’t utter a word.

The golden angel swung a shining saw and defeated the giant.

The light blue warrior completely shattered the beasts wrapped in fallen leaves.

Red flames burned brilliantly inside the navy blue fortress.

The dark green mist that had newly bloomed was pushed back under the green storm.

It wasn't just an act for showmanship.

It wasn't an artificially created movie scene.

The girls seriously engaged in battle while exerting abilities that caused tremors just by watching.

They finally witnessed the true power of magical girls with their own eyes.

"A-amazing…"

"Those girls quietly obey traffic lights and pay at convenience stores?"

"If [Beginning] hadn't spread her domain, those girls would have been rampaging around?"

"So something more incredible than we thought happened in Kabukicho…!"

"Captain Himari is so cool! Beautiful! Thrilling!"

"The Green Vigilante is quite something too!"

"[Flame] is a god!!!"

"This is what magical girls are…!"

Wooooaaahhhh!

Overwhelming power becomes an object of awe just by existing.

Though smaller than [Beginning], who is treated almost like a natural phenomenon due to being so overwhelming, the fight of 2-

star girls whose clear forms could be confirmed was more beautiful than any drama.

And the following fights.

The angel burned in flames.

The warrior was pushed back by the storm.

Now, among the 64 1-star magical girls and 7 2-star magical girls in the arena.

Only the two strongest girls remained.

One of those girls stood there with a single purpose.

* * *

“You’re really amazing. Are you really a born 1-star? Even the Sato kid couldn’t do this much.”

Ichika looked at Yuki with truly admiring eyes. Not just her combat ability, but her skillful coping ability and analytical skills were something she really wanted to learn from.

Fidget

The very Yuki who received the praise was restless and couldn’t make eye contact with Ichika.

‘The, the terrorist leader is praising me…’

Yuki hesitated for a while, feeling awkward.

“What’s this, you were so tough during the fight but now you’re shy.”

“Th-that aside, aren’t you going to take out your flag?”

“Flag? What flag?”

“The orange flag you always take out when fighting… you don’t have it?”

“I don’t have one.”

Ichika said with a grin as she raised both fists to Yuki.

“These are my weapons.”

“H-heh…”

Strange.

The first trademark that comes to mind for the leader of the rebel group FLAG is the orange flag used as a weapon.

‘That thing of going around swinging it with comrades’ names engraved and blood splattered was really brutal…’

Yuki quietly accepted that something must have changed.

Anyway, in the changed past, Fujimoto had become a fool regarding magical girl issues, and the group called FLAG was never established in the first place.

Yuki quietly gathered her thoughts.

A fight to meet [Beginning].

Until she catches her eye.

Until she comes to find me.

I will fight with all my might.

Wooooaaahhhh!!!

The cheers of the audience.

The arena specially prepared for the final fight was not a marble-floored space with roses blooming around, but a circular arena made of rainbow-colored glass.

Pat

Ichika patted Yuki’s back.

The look of struggle in her eyes, not caring about the outcome of winning or losing, but still wanting to win.

“Let’s fight our best and have fun!”

A fun fight…

For Yuki, those words were as awkward a combination as cold hot chocolate.

For Yuki, fighting was just painful and lonely.

But now she understood the meaning of those words a little.

“Yes.”

Yuki quietly nodded.

Watch me.

‘[Beginning]…!’

The two entered the shining arena.

Wooooaaahhhh!!

“Yes!! Finally!! It’s finally the last match!! The only survivor among the amazing 2-star magical girls, [Freedom]!! And her opponent is none other than!!”

Wooooaaahhhh!!!

“The myth of the most consecutive wins, rising from the very bottom!! The hero of 1-stars!! The legend of flames sweeping across the battlefield!! The magical girl of [Flame]!!!”

[Flame]!!

[Freedom]!!

[Flame]!!

[Flame]!!

[Flame]!!

While there were not a few voices cheering for Ichika, who had shown the legend of the Green Vigilante and overwhelming skill, people cheered for Yuki who had risen from the bottom most of all.

“Huh, if I beat you, I’ll be treated like a complete villain, huh?”

Ichika laughed for a moment, then stopped abruptly.

Grrrr…

Green glowing eyes.

A green storm unfolded around Ichika, whose expression had turned blank.

Simply analyzing the enemy and winning.

The enhancement-type ability possessed by the magical girl of [Freedom] was simple and powerful.

As she felt Ichika’s fighting instinct scanning everything, Yuki also raised her energy.

Wooooaaahhhh!

[Flame]!!

The hearts cheering for Yuki gathered and were absorbed into the red star.

Though not enough to raise a light, it was just enough to produce output half a step short of 2-stars.

She had always followed two or three steps behind others.

Half a step is no different from being ahead for her.

[Flame] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Red Flame Spark

Whoosh!

Red flames rose from the ground against the green storm. Though small in size, they were definitely dominating the space.

Bang!

Avoiding the incoming green true angle, Yuki quickly created a flame scale.

Imitating [Plague].

She couldn't recreate even a speck of the authority she possessed, but Yuki's elemental magic was as free as an emission type, so she could apply the principle.

Click

The flame scale imitating the black scale of greed moved, gradually absorbing the green storm and changing it into red flames. It was a very slow speed, but the space Yuki dominated was expanding.

Whoosh

"Ugh!"

A fist imbued with green energy grazed past Yuki's head, which she barely avoided, and blood flowed from her cheek.

No matter how much future knowledge she drew upon, she couldn't overcome the absolute difference in output.

"Still, I have to buy time!"

Ichika shot forward in a straight line, her green eyes flashing.

Yuki raised her flame sword and engaged in a fierce exchange with the charging Ichika.

Bang bang bang bang

Every time the sword and fist collided, pure physical force and heat spread with explosive sounds.

‘There’s no killing intent! This is just a test too!’

She could only rely on experience to predict Ichika’s fighting path and bring her sword to meet fists coming at a speed her eyes couldn’t follow.

Boom!

“Kyah?! Ugh…”

Even that didn’t work against Ichika, who was accustomed to struggle even before becoming a magical girl. Deflecting the flame sword that was brought up recklessly, Ichika threw a light punch.

Whoosh!

Yuki gritted her teeth and spread a curtain to deflect it.

Swoosh!

The feint that had no killing intent turned into a true strike, curving towards Yuki’s head.

Death.

Yuki sensed the moment of death she had felt tediously after blooming the alias of [Resurrection]. At that moment, she put one spell into the scale that had become barely capable of executing commands.

She let go of the sword in her hand and tightened her neck with telekinesis as much as possible.

Bang!

Ichika’s fist, imbued with tremendous force, hit Yuki’s head.

Silence.

“…”

3 seconds

She had blown off her head. The fighting instinct signaled that the fight was over, but something felt strange.

Yuki, who had tried to avoid any attack until now, had taken a hit.

2 seconds

‘She just couldn’t avoid it because she was fooled by the feint?’

That could be the case.

1 second

But Ichika felt some uneasiness and pulled back her fist again for a finishing blow.

Click

Flinch

Ichika felt the flame scale that had been quietly absorbing power from behind move and turned around. At that moment, the scale absorbed all the red flame space and disappeared.

Rustle

“Ugh…?!”

Ichika’s vision was split exactly in half.

When she looked forward, Yuki, whose face had completely disappeared, was swinging a large scythe while spewing flames.

“Ugh…”

Her eyes, contorted from enduring the pain still felt after regenerating her face, burned with red light.

Ichika felt that she couldn’t use the left half of her body for a moment after receiving that scythe attack.

‘The attack is shallow but strange…’

Something more fundamental than physical dismemberment had been attacked.

“Aaaaaaah!”

“Kyaaaaaaah!”

Ichika’s Six Harmonies Fist, drawn with green energy, and Yuki’s large scythe made of flames clashed.

Booooom

Explosion.

Wooooaaahhhh!

What was seen after the smoke cleared was Ichika with the sword Yuki had dropped earlier pierced in her left chest, and Yuki staggering with both hands that had been holding the scythe blown off.

“A miraculous victory!!! The winner of the 1st Magical Girl Friendly Mock Battle is!!! The born 1-star!! The magical girl of [Flame]!!!”

Woong

With the vibration, the two returned to their original state.

Woaaah!

“Wow! That! What was that! The scythe and the scale! It was really so cool!”

Ichika excitedly asked about the decisive factor of defeat that even her fighting instinct had failed to interpret.

“Haha, well… there’s something like that.”

Yuki hedged, feeling that Ichika probably wouldn’t believe her even if she explained.

“Interview! Interview!”

[Reporting] came running from far across the arena with sparkling eyes.

“Oh, and there are prizes for the top 4 rankers! Here you go! Magical girl of [Freedom]!”

Heave-ho!

The large gift box was luxuriously wrapped in lavender wrapping paper.

“Oh, thank you!”

Rustle

Rustle

Ichika hurriedly opened the box right there. Ignoring the luxury brand clothes, headphones, and cosmetics, she searched for the item she desperately wanted.

It was a smartphone sponsored by an American company for the purpose of indirect advertising to gain influence over magical girls.

“Kyaaaah! This is it! This is life!!”

Ichika, who roared towards the sky, hugged the gift box to her chest and disappeared with excited steps.

[Reporting] was flustered by that excessively materialistic behavior, but judged that the company would be satisfied seeing her excited reaction broadcast.

“Magical girl of [Flame]! You’ve achieved an amazing victory! Everyone in Walpurgis is probably watching!”

“Really…?”

That person too?

I wonder if she saw me acting so flashy.

“It-it’s not that great…”

Yuki, who had been scratching her cheek, thought for a moment.

"…"

Does [Beginning], who shouted about dreams and hope, know what's going to happen in the future?

Her actions thoroughly checked Fujimoto and protected Korea, China, Europe, etc. from the Scavengers' rampage…

No way.

No way.

No way…!

Thump thump thump thump

Yuki's heart raced due to the sudden thought of 'no way' and the fear of being treated as a strange person by [Beginning].

"[Flame]?"

Tremble tremble

Yuki, with a bit of expectation and trembling in her voice…

Said to her.

"I have something I want to tell the magical girl of [Beginning]."

"…I'll be waiting at the place where [Alliance]'s [Shelter] is."

* * *

As soon as I heard those words, I ran like mad.

The Alliance's shelter was… a term that existed only in the original work, not now.

And it appears after January next year.

No way.

No way.

No way…!

The her I know is waiting for me.

The her I know called for me.

Not as the 27-year-old Sim Hyun-woo.

Not as the 15-year-old Hikari.

I ran to her as the 15-year-old Sim Hyun-woo who had picked up and read <Magical Girl HAZARD> from a used bookstore.

Chapter 58 : The Light of Beginning, The Last Snow

The faint sound of people playing soccer can be heard through the library window.

Whoosh

The autumn wind has become almost unbearably cold, so I close the window I had opened for ventilation and sit down.

Rustle

I check the illustration drawn on the cover.

The protagonist Yuki is looking straight ahead with a determined expression while crying. Behind her, Alex is reaching out threateningly towards Yuki with a sinister smile.

I carefully remove the cover and start reading the light novel with its worn adhesive binding.

Rustle

"…They really drew Alex to be annoyingly good."

I carefully appreciate the illustrations at the front, checking the appearances of the characters.

To feel the story they will create more vividly.

＜Magical Girl HAZARD＞ Volume 5.

The group battle scenes with magical girls in the latter half of the story and the scene where she awakens [Resurrection] were good, but…

“Volume 5 is still the best.”

The scene where Yuki stands up for the first time not for her own survival, but to save someone else.

[Magical girls… exist to protect everyone!]

She tries to lure a huge airship to protect the village of survivors who fled to Russia from the Scavengers.

[Because I’m… a magical girl…!]

In the end, Yuki, lacking in power, is defeated by the overwhelming power of a fully bloomed 3-star magical girl and ends up fleeing to [Death]’s domain, which could be called a frustrating part, but…

The sight of her advancing towards a path where she could lose everything for someone else was too dazzling.

[We’ll surely become happy!]

A story of a girl overcoming past pains, present timidity, and future anxieties to speak of beauty and fight.

If you say it’s a story created by a bearded old man typing for money, there’s nothing to say, but…

‘What’s wrong with dreaming of a good story and cool characters.’

One page.

One page.

And so I follow Yuki’s life and cheer her on.

* * *

“Huff… huff…!”

How long have I been running?

The warp gate I hadn’t yet installed in Europe.

My whereabouts cut off after entering Korea according to my passport.

The unfinished work lingered in my mind, but now I was just running.

‘Sorry…!’

I hurriedly returned to Japan through an already installed gate.

Rena and Kohane, who were resting in the council office where the gate exit was, were startled to see me suddenly running in.

“Whoa?! [Beginning]?!”

“The installation is already complete…?!”

“Sorry!”

I jumped out the window, undid my transformation into civilian clothes, and ran towards Shinjuku.

Thump thump thump

My breath was running out and my heart felt like it would burst.

“Haa… haa…!”

I’ve sprinted at full speed many times since becoming a magical girl, but this was the first time I’d been so out of breath.

No.

The fact that she was waiting for me.

The fact that it was the her I knew.

I felt like my chest would burst.

We… all of us…

‘Will become happy.’

To the young and immature Sim Hyun-woo, that one line from Yuki was too gentle a comfort.

A few characters engraved in ink in the light novel seeped into my heart beyond the pages.

[We'll all surely become happy.]

Yuki.

I can reach out to you who was crying beyond the pages.

I can reach out to you who knows the despairing future.

I had so many things I wanted to say to the scarred girl I met when I was 15.

You know, Yuki.

I've known you for a very long time.

I wanted to see you who truly shines, not the fake shining me.

"Hah!"

Tap!

"Whoa?! That's dangerous!"

"A magical girl? Be careful!"

"You'll get scolded by the security team!"

I leapt over the crowded pedestrian bridge stairs in one bound. Since it was common for magical girls to act like this when in a hurry, everyone complained but ignored it.

'Yuki…!'

Because it was a world that had already changed.

Because it was a world I had changed to save people.

I didn’t look for you, thinking you’d be doing well.

I thought we’d meet naturally someday.

I left you alone, knowing the scarred future in this changed world.

-Find me.

I’m sorry. I was too indifferent.

-I need a place where it’s okay for me to exist.

I’ll become that for you.

“I…!”

* * *

“Will you… come find me?”

Yuki was sitting on a park bench.

In front of the [Alliance Shelter] that would be built in a future that doesn’t exist in the changed past.

She regretted the words she had blurted out in a momentary hope.

Thinking about it, it didn’t make sense.

No matter how much the past had changed, the basis for the words she had uttered was too flimsy.

Fujimoto was originally the ruler of Japan, and someone to fight against to protect magical girls.

It was natural to stop the Scavengers as they were heinous criminals who killed ordinary people and magical girls.

‘…Was it too delusional to think she would know the same future?’

Sigh

Yuki sighed, hugging her knees on the bench.

“I should have just said I wanted to meet normally…”

She had always been like this.

Just without thinking, without any basis.

‘…That’s why no one believes me.’

Is it because she spent a long time without friends due to her burns?

‘…Honestly, it’s not even because of the burns anymore.’

Timidity.

Delusions of grandeur.

Fool.

-Are you still saying such things?

-There’s no such thing as hope in this world.

-We just live by devouring each other anyway.

-Please just shut up.

-You’re probably the only one who thinks that way.

-We’re all finished.

Destruction.

The end.

‘Why did someone like me end up remaining at the end?’

I know, it’s just that I luckily bloomed [Resurrection] so I couldn’t die even if I wanted to.

If someone amazing like [Beginning] had remained instead of shabby me, surely…

A loner sat on the throne of the destroyed world.

A loner sat on the bench in the quiet park.

That was the only difference.

‘Still… I want to meet her…’

-*Magical girls bloom with dreams!*

-…*Magical girls are beings that give hope.*

Yes. That’s right.

I… believe that too.

Thank you.

For telling everyone.

Thank you.

For changing my immature second beginning with your gentle hand.

“So… I want to meet you…”

Yuki murmured quietly, lowering her head.

In the quiet park, there was only silence…

Tap tap tap!

Flinch

Yuki tensed up with her face buried in her knees.

There had been no one in this park until now.

A presence.

If she raised her head, would [Beginning] be there?

‘No… it’s probably just someone jogging…’

If the person who came wasn’t [Beginning], she would go home alone

dejectedly, eat dinner, and go to sleep.

Thump thump thump

And then she would laugh awkwardly and think, ah~ it was an impossible imagination after all…

Thump thump thump

…Surely that's what would happen, but why was her heart pounding so hard it felt like it would burst?

Yuki slowly raised her head.

Black pants.

Black hoodie.

Baseball cap.

Silver hair.

The silver-haired girl took off her baseball cap.

Her silver hair shimmered dazzlingly in the cold winter wind.

Her slender eyes were hidden by long eyelashes that looked like they were made of silver thread.

Snow.

She's like snow.

Yuki thought that name Yuki (雪, snow) would suit that beautiful girl more than her clumsy self.

That girl had understood her words and come to find her.

She had discovered Yuki, transcending the painful future and changed past.

"…Yuki."

“…[Beginning]?”

Ah.

She… knows me.

She knows… the changed past.

[Beginning] spoke with an expression like she was about to cry.

“My name is… Hikari.”

Red pupils were visible between her trembling eyelashes.

Light.

“…Hikari.”

“Hey, this might sound ridiculous, but… will you listen?”

“…Yes.”

It’s okay, I’m used to ridiculous things.

But Yuki couldn’t say those words because her throat was choked up.

Hikari took Yuki’s hand with trembling fingers.

Yuki started crying from the moment she grasped that hand in return because it was so warm.

She stood up slowly from the bench, tears flowing.

The girl who had been alone was no longer alone.

“I’ve… known you… for a very long time.”

“…Yes.”

It really was a ridiculous thing to say, but Yuki’s heart felt like it would burst.

Those ridiculous words entered Yuki’s heart and melted away past

wounds.

Thump thump thump

“I believed in Yuki’s words. I believed in Yuki’s words more than the end of the destroyed world.”

“…Yes.”

“Thanks to Yuki’s words and the world Yuki lived in, selfish me was able to change.”

“…Yes.”

“Thank you. I gained so much strength from seeing Yuki fight.”

“…Yes.”

“For a very long time… I wanted to be your friend.”

“…Yes.”

Thump thump thump

Yuki felt that this park was as quiet as the destroyed world because of the heat from the two hands she was holding and the sound of her heart about to burst. It was surely a world full of hope and bustle, and she had intended to protect it, but.

At least for now.

…It felt like only the two of them were left in this world.

Thump thump thump

Hikari smiled brightly while crying.

“So we’ll surely…”

Yuki also smiled brightly while crying.

[We’ll surely become happy.]

A girl who came from the past 3 years ago and a girl who came from the future 2 years later.

The two shared memories of a future that no longer existed and met for the first time across the changed past.

Believing in the happiness that would surely come.

The pain that began on a hot summer day returned as a warm hand across the cold winter.

Yuki was so happy about it that she could only cry.

“We’ll surely become happy.”

Chapter 59 : Change #7

(A person wearing a horse head mask stands in the center of the screen.)

“Hello, it’s already December of 2011, a year that has had many special events.”

Sad background music

“For the past half year, I have been focused on making a 1/1 scale model of [Beginning]-chan according to my own desires.”

(Photos of numerous work records and records of the horse head person’s attempts scroll by.)

(From the prototype that tried to recreate only the chest to the high-quality full-body mannequin doll that combined with a mannequin in earnest and expressed skin texture.)

(The horse head person hugging a decent quality successful work dressed in casual clothes while watching the Magical Girl Friendly Match.)

“I stopped uploading videos of the 1/1 doll-making process that recreated [Beginning]-chan’s wonderful figure in early October.”

(The horse head mask bows politely)

“My mother caught me. The problem was that I had it out because it had become too big to fit in the closet anymore.”

Even sadder background music

“…It seems she was very sad to see her 35-year-old son living as a freeter and being absorbed in a hobby.”

(The horse head mask person stares into space, unable to continue speaking for a moment.)

“I can’t keep living as a freeter while only doing what I like forever.”

“I’ve been running towards becoming someone who makes plastic models and figure models since I was young, but all that’s left is a life with only this shabby horse head mask of desire.”

(The horse head mask person lowers their head.)

“This broadcast I started to let those who were looking forward to my videos know how I’ve been… it might be my last personal broadcast.”

Grand background music

“…Because from next year on, I will continue working as a designer for a large silicone doll manufacturing company to make your dreams come true.”

(The horse head mask person shaking hands with the president of a silicone doll company and signing a contract.)

(The horse head mask person sitting in a meeting room with related company presidents as an official designer.)

(The horse mask person quietly points at the screen.)

“…Next February. If you send your dreams and hopes on the estimate form on our homepage, I will definitely make them with all my might.”

(Close-up of the horse head mask.)

“…Your girlfriend, your favorite.”

* * *

122 : Anonymous 2011/12/20

\(ˆqˆ`)/ Ah, failed again. My favorite magical girl lost again. She got eliminated without even making it to the preliminaries this time

too.

123 : Anonymous 2011/12/20

122＜＜ Just go and give her a pat on the head ww

124 : Anonymous 2011/12/20

She's already getting pats (cash) from big companies… I wonder if she'll look at my fan letter…

125 : Anonymous 2011/12/20

124＜＜ Then you should have made strong ones like [Flame], [Dagger], [Penetration], [Shooting] your favorites from the start, right?

126 : Anonymous 2011/12/20

125 ＜＜＜ ???????? Change my favorite???????

127 : Anonymous 2011/12/20

125 ＜＜＜＜＜ Are you crazy???? Besides, [Flame] hasn't appeared in friendly matches since then.

128 : Anonymous 2011/12/20

＜(´･ω･`)＞ This is why ordinary people…

129 : Anonymous 2011/12/20

Stanning already proven strong ones is something only elementary kids who just started being magical girl fans do ww

130 : Anonymous 2011/12/20

You don't know the fun of giving head pats when the girl you're cheering for barely makes it through the first round by luck and type advantage, then loses in the second round?

131 : Anonymous 2011/12/20

And when you see her trying hard to ask for cheers because she doesn't even have a corporate sponsor, doesn't your heart burn? ww

132 : Anonymous 2011/12/20

If it's an unbloomed lousy magical girl who can't even participate in friendly matches and barely promotes herself on SNS, I could eat 5 bowls of rice easily wwww

133 : Anonymous 2011/12/20

After all, the fun of being a magical girl fan is in giving head pats to unbloomed lousy magical girls wwwww

134 : Anonymous 2011/12/20

Sometimes when I'm in a good mood and praise her for shyly posting her recent situation in her relief corps uniform, she uploads more than 10 photos that day wwwww

135 : Anonymous 2011/12/20

Thanks to everyone's support, I received a gift from my star! < < < She really seems like a lousy magical girl and I love it wwwww

136 : Anonymous 2011/12/20

I think you're all a bit crazy. (◦Д◦;;;)

* * *

[What are you doing?]

"Hmm… does this sound too demanding?"

Tick tick

[Hikari, what are you doing right now?]

"Hmm… it seems like I'm asking too persistently."

[Hikari! Want to guess what I'm doing?]

“…Too frivolous.”

[I’m watching TV with Dad, you?]

“Hmm… will she think it’s too childish…?”

Tick tick

[I’m watching TV, you?]

“Ugh, it feels like I’m forcing her to talk…”

[I’m watching TV]

“This seems even weirder…”

If Hikari sent ‘?’ in response to this, I wouldn’t be able to handle it.

Flop

Yuki pulled the hood attached to her rabbit pajamas over her head and collapsed onto the kotatsu in the living room.

Her father, who had stopped drinking at some point, glanced at her and then focused back on the TV.

That day in the park, after crying together for a long time, they didn’t actually have a proper conversation.

Just that she knew about Yuki’s fight, that she came from another world, and…

“…that she wanted to… be my friend…”

Thump thump

“Uuugh…!”

“Yuki, did you make a friend?”

“Huh?! Ah… yes.”

“…I see.”

"…"

"…That's good."

"…Yes."

Friend.

For the first time, I proudly told Dad that I had made a friend.

Thump thump

Even though it wasn't a lie, Yuki's heart pounded as if she had done something wrong.

Feeling unnecessarily embarrassed, Yuki put her smartphone in her pajama pocket and pretended to watch TV.

'…I was a bit surprised that she doesn't even carry a smartphone.'

When Yuki asked to exchange SNS contacts with Hikari, who said she had to go back because she had work to do.

-…I, I don't have a smartphone.

She learned for the first time that a person's face could turn not just pale, but transparent.

So Yuki gave one of the smartphones she received as a prize from the friendly match to Hikari.

-I'll cherish it dearly…

Hikari held that smartphone preciously close to her chest and took Yuki's contact information with her.

And now, three weeks later, they've become someone who occasionally keeps in touch.

'…I ended up using casual speech caught up in the mood, but it should be fine since we're friends, right?'

Wasn't Hikari the one who called me Yuki first? Yuki was confident.

More than that, now she had to think about what to say to Hikari.

“…But Yuki, aren’t you looking at your phone too much these days?”

“Huh? I’m just… looking at it occasionally to keep in touch.”

With my friend.

“Well, it might be unnecessary meddling on my part, but lately whenever I see you, you’re always looking at your phone.”

“…”

Yuki felt puzzled by those words and remembered the moments she had touched her smartphone today.

As soon as she woke up in the morning, she sent [Did you sleep well? It’s cold in Japan today.]

While changing clothes, she chatted a bit on the phone.

While eating breakfast, she suddenly wanted to show what she was eating, so she sent a photo.

She talked about foreign countries with Hikari, who sent photos of the scenery in Germany.

She made a fuss and asked if it was okay when Hikari sent [Actually, I’m illegally entering as the magical girl of Beginning right now.]

When lunchtime came, while making udon with Dad, she asked [Do you like udon?]

She asked whether she preferred to eat it with the broth or dip it, whether she liked eating it with tempura, whether she liked adding an egg.

She asked if there were any snacks she liked.

When the sun was setting, she took a photo of the beautiful sunset and sent it, and was happy when Hikari immediately replied [It’s beautiful.]

She laughed when she saw Hikari flustered after sending her a video compilation of things Hikari had said before.

"…"

Am I being too clingy?

Yuki felt her heart sink.

She wanted to send [Am I not being too annoying?] right now to check.

No, she had to check. She didn't want to lose her first friend for such a silly reason.

Tap tap tap

[Am I not being too annoying?]

Send.

Shikishima Ryota shook his head watching his daughter's behavior.

His daughter, whose relationship with him had recently improved, was now grinning, apparently satisfied with the response she got from the other person.

'I'm glad you made a friend, Yuki.'

His daughter, who had unexpectedly participated in the magical girl friendly match and won, seemed to have made a magical girl friend.

The friendly matches held for 3 days every week since the first one that had caused a stir in the magical girl society worldwide were treated as a new era of sports.

Confident magical girls aimed only for the friendly matches where they could demonstrate their abilities. As the number of participants in the friendly matches grew too large, the council introduced various restrictions such as excluding repeat participants and dividing into regional leagues.

[Wow! This drink is so~ refreshing! It feels like even starlight is sparkling!]

[Ha, haha! Maybe I was able to win because I wore this brand of shoes~?]

Among such magical girls, those who received a lot of attention for their looks or abilities received 'voluntary sponsorships' from companies and engaged in 'voluntary advertising'. This strange capitalistic symbiotic relationship was a hot potato topic in the council, but they decided to turn a blind eye on the premise that it was voluntary.

-However, we will take legal action against companies that use this as an excuse to oppress magical girls, and conversely, restrict participation in matches and use of abilities for magical girls who take unfair advantages.

…And so, backed by capitalistic support, magical girls honed their abilities every day to win in the battles that took place every weekend.

"The magical girl of [Penetration]!! She has finally become the winner of the born 1-star division!!"

While participation mostly took place in Japan, where the magical girl population was overwhelmingly large, there were also many strong contenders coming from abroad with special determination.

"They really fight well, though."

Ryota muttered as he watched the magical girls battling with movie-like movements on the screen.

"Yuki, how on earth did you win in a place like that?"

"…"

"Hm?"

Once again, his daughter was grinning while looking at her phone.

"Geez…"

That friend of hers must be tired too.

Chapter 60 : Change #8

“…Do you really think that makes sense? Seriously?”

“Ahaha, well… Madam Chairwoman. There’s a valid reason for all this. Please listen to me…”

“That’s right! Um, there’s someone among our relatives who really likes European cheese… um…”

“Oh, right! That’s right! Her uncle runs a huge wine bar and asked us to bring some European cheese…”

“Ahaha… We received a bit more pocket money because of that…”

Throb

Sumire covered her furrowing brow with her hand.

The two girls wearing white relief corps uniforms looked sheepish as they watched Sumire.

“There’s absolutely no problem with bringing back souvenirs for personal use after being dispatched to Europe. But this…!”

As Sumire’s voice rose an octave with each word due to anger, the girls looked even more sheepish.

Behind the girls was a large cart filled to the brim with cheese. A whole lot of it.

‘Bringing in this much without sterilization certificates or customs clearance could be problematic…!’

Sumire had come when the magical girl in charge of warp gate entry records asked for her help, only to witness a mountain of smelly cheese filling the office. While inwardly thinking it was fortunate that

it was food rather than dangerous items, she spoke in a desperate voice.

“If cases of privately using the warp gates and magical girl free movement treaty like this increase, it could end up harming other magical girls!”

“We’re, we’re sorry.”

“…We’re sorry.”

While pressing her brow, Sumire decided to report this case to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries official and notify the magical girls about the prohibited items among overseas goods.

‘We’ll need to implement at least 5 minutes of education on prohibited items before using the warp gates.’

She thought it might not be bad to formalize the procedure of entrusting magical girls with overseas goods transportation through consultation with each self-governing body, since things had come to this.

‘Another agenda item to be dealt with at the Grand Council has been added.’

After the full-scale overseas domain exchange using warp gates was implemented on a trial basis. While there were many positive changes, small accidents like this happened occasionally.

“Madam Chairwoman, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has contacted us to bring the items.”

“Yes, please tell them we’ll handle it according to regulations.”

“Understood.”

Sumire quietly looked at the two girls who had caused the incident.

“…We’re sorry.”

“…We’re sorry.”

The two girls followed the administrative magical girl, pulling the cheese cart.

“Phew, as much as there are advantages to warp gates, there are many accidents too.”

The oversaturated Japanese magical girls found opportunities to gain starlight and clues for blooming while going abroad to provide support work.

The desperate attitude of overseas magical girls.

The completely different overseas field compared to Japan.

Requests exchanged on equal footing with companies.

Magical girls began to gradually take on the responsibility of leading others with dreams and hope, moving beyond being immature greenhouse dwellers.

“It’s a problem that they cause accidents like this sometimes, though.”

Sigh

She felt relieved that it was such a trivial matter that the unique weapon she had brought, thinking it was an emergency, was embarrassing.

Just as Sumire sighed and was about to head back to her office to write documents-

Bam!

“Madam Chairwoman! The relief corps personnel dispatched to Korea are asking to extend their overseas stay…”

“Madam Chairwoman! They want to have a dinner meeting with the magical girls who participated in the last friendly match in France…”

“Madam Chairwoman! The Chinese government officially wants to entrust magical girls with logistics transportation…”

Administrative magical girls in suits approached Sumire, pleading desperately.

Clang

In her bewilderment, Sumire dropped her unique weapon, the Japanese sword, from her hand.

“Looks like… I’ll have to… pull another all-nighter.”

* * *

“We’re sorry only the three of us could come out.”

Laura said with an apologetic expression, standing with her back to the endless wheat field. Her long brown hair swayed in the wind blowing within the domain.

I stopped my steps as I was about to cross the warp gate to return and looked back.

Laura, the magical girl of [Unity].

Ella, the magical girl of [Heavy Armor].

Chloé, the magical girl of [Penetration].

The trio who had helped me in Europe during the busy 3 weeks of warp gate installation had come to see me off. Thanks to their efforts, unregistered magical girls living nearby had gathered courage to enter the domain. As a result, the number of magical girls belonging to the European Union increased from 42 to 71.

‘A lot has happened…’

For the past 3 weeks, I conducted safety inspections on whether the 40 warp gates were functioning properly and if there were any time differences between routes. In the meantime, I occasionally attended the Grand Council to mediate rules and response methods for each domain.

“No, it’s fine. You must all be busy. I’m grateful that even the three of

you came out."

"Magical girl of [Beginning]."

Ella, the magical girl of [Heavy Armor], called me with a gruff voice while smiling. The yellow plate armor and surcoat worn by the tall girl with bright blonde hair braided and swept back suited her very well.

"Yes?"

"…Thank you. For catching [Bombing] with Captain Park Saebyeok, whom we couldn't catch."

"…"

"For showing us the direction to move forward, for helping us cultivate the strength to protect those who remain."

Thud

Ella struck her armor with her right hand.

"Well, there are still many opponents I haven't beaten… but I'll become even stronger. Thank you for giving us the opportunity."

Clang

Chloé, the magical girl of [Penetration], wearing a plumed hat and light infantry attire, placed her rapier in front of her chest and said:

"On behalf of the European magical girls, we thank you."

Laura quietly smiled and lifted the priest's robe she wore under her brown robe slightly to bow.

"…"

The wheat field at sunset.

The blowing wind.

The swaying oak trees.

The tall girls seeing me off in their own ways.

In the original work, Europe was only described as becoming prey to the Scavengers as demons flocked.

"…"

There was only a simple description that 'it was destroyed.' There was no mention of how it changed afterward.

But.

At least looking at their eyes, I was convinced that the fate left for Europe would not be destruction.

I would help make it so.

"…It was what I had to do."

Whoosh

The endlessly blowing wind and the lonely wheat field.

But the warmth felt.

Leaving behind the domain reflecting the mental image of European magical girls.

I returned.

"I'll make Meilin human! Thanks for making the training ground!"

Li Na, the magical girl of [Dagger], waving her twin tails as she tried to grab Meilin and take her to the training ground.

"Someone this pretty can't possibly not be human! And thank you for the warp gate!"

Li Meilin, the magical girl of [Harmony], whining that she doesn't want to get hurt while clinging to a bamboo chair.

"Thank you for saving Korea. And for getting along well with Dorim too."

Oh Sanghyuk, the team leader of the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team, who had been very accommodating of my convenience in hiding my identity.

“Oh! Eunbit unni, are you going back? I booked a plane ticket for you. I guess you won’t be taking planes anymore now that you can use the warp?”

Kang Dorim, the magical girl of [Cyberbrain], who has become a reliable companion in preparing for the future.

“Hmm, that training ground is very good. As expected, the path to becoming a victor on the battlefield is through training that’s like real combat. If you want to protect people, call White Wing anytime, [Beginning].”

Park Saebyeok, the magical girl of [Medical], who willingly shares methods of becoming stronger with other magical girls and provides a lot of stimulation.

Before returning to Japan, I briefly stopped by Busan using the warp.

“…I won’t force you. A magical girl’s own will is the most important thing.”

“…”

“But if you ever want to help someone but can’t think of a way, please contact the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team. We’ll definitely come to help.”

I gave the business card of the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team to Hong Nayeon, the unbloomed born 2-star magical girl of [Sea], who still wouldn’t open the door.

Bam

The door opened and a girl with blue two-tone short hair wearing a hoodie over a short skirt came out with a sullen expression.

“…Alright. I’ll do that.”

“Take care.”

The day before leaving Korea, I heard a positive response from Hong Nayeon for the first time.

Ding ding ding ding

The smartphone that I was just using as a Wi-Fi receiver because I hadn’t gone through the activation process in Japan rang like crazy as it caught the Wi-Fi signal.

Chuckle

I couldn’t help but smile wryly.

[Hikari! For today’s lunch…]

[They showed a movie on TV…]

[Which country are you going to today?]

[When can I use the warp gate too…]

[It’s so amazing how many things are different from the past I knew!]

Dozens of notifications came at once to the messenger app I had downloaded to keep in touch with Yuki.

They were all messages from Yuki.

The joy of a girl savoring the peace of daily life after returning from a future full of tragedy.

I congratulated Yuki on her happiness, because I would probably be jumping for joy like that if I succeeded in returning to my past life’s Korea.

Tick tick

I replied to Yuki where Wi-Fi was available.

‘She can be like that. She’s only mentally 17 years old at most.’

She has the right to enjoy the happiness of daily life after going through all those trials and returning.

…Although our journey is not over yet.

Although the trials are not over yet, as Yuki said, we live to become happy.

“Phew… time to go back.”

3 months.

I visited more countries and experienced more things than I had prepared for in Japan. I formed connections with unexpected people and accomplished more than I had anticipated.

December 20th.

In just a few days, we’ll reach the starting point of <Magical Girl HAZARD> in earnest based on the original work.

The suspiciously silent Middle East and Russia.

The magical girl of [War].

Scavengers.

Emily Hopkins.

The three evil gods.

Trials.

‘Mother…’

I walked the streets of Busan for a while, feeling the cold winter wind, holding in my heart the things I had to do.

It’s time to return now.

Chapter 61 : The Great Chaotic Christmas Operation

December 21st

“Welcome back! Leader!”

“Welcome back, Hikari-chan!”

“Hikari! Welcome back!”

As soon as I came out through the immigration gate at Narita Airport, I heard my companions calling out to me.

Ichika and Hana were jumping up and down, calling out loudly, while Yuki was waving both hands from a bit further away.

‘I wonder if it’s because I met Ichika in summer. It’s a bit strange to see her in winter clothes.’

I had the impression that Ichika would somehow be running around in short sleeves and shorts even in winter with a runny nose.

Hana was wearing winter clothes and a skirt based on yellow, which seemed to have been chosen by Mrs. Sato, while Ichika was wearing a green sukajan over ripped jeans.

Yuki was wearing the same red coat I saw her in at the park that time, with a red scarf wrapped around her neck.

“I’m back.”

I took a plane from Busan Gimhae Airport and arrived at Narita Airport. I’ve learned from recent travels between countries by plane and warp, but the smell when arriving in each country is subtly different.

As soon as I arrive and smell the different air, I feel ‘Ah, I’m in a different country now.’

…Although this entire world is foreign to me, so everywhere I go gives the impression of being a different land.

It seemed natural to say ‘I’m back’ in the place where Sato Hana, the Sato couple, and Master, whom I’ve known the longest, are.

“Leader! Don’t you have any more of those French snacks left? Kyoko and I ate them all that day!”

“I want Belgian chocolate! Mom said it was really delicious too!”

Ichika and Hana immediately moved on to casual conversation since they had seen me periodically through the domain. It reminded me of when my parents would just say ‘Oh, you’re back’ during military leave, making me smile wryly.

Squeeze

“Hm? What’s wrong, Yuki?”

“Um… welcome back.”

Feeling someone grab my sleeve, I turned around to see Yuki looking at me intently with a truly glad expression.

‘Ah, I’ve only talked to Yuki through messenger.’

I had been wondering whether to tell Yuki about the private room or not, but I felt bad about bringing a new friend in arbitrarily without Ichika, Kyoko, and Hana’s permission, so I didn’t.

‘I kept putting it off once or twice, and then I missed the timing to bring it up because I was busy…’

Also, since Yuki was a celebrity from the 1st friendly match, it didn’t feel right to ask her to meet in the plaza.

Even now, I felt like every passing person was furtively recognizing our group.

“Yeah, I’m back, Yuki.”

“Ooh! [Flame], you really did become friends with the Leader? I wondered what [Alliance’s Shelter] was, but it was a code word you two decided on!”

Ah.

Come to think of it, this is exactly the time when Ichika would have broken away from Fujimoto and the Alliance’s research facility and started a rebellion.

The tragic December.

The Fujimoto Uprising.

Yuki seemed to recall that too, as she looked at Ichika with a slightly pale expression.

“Huh? What’s wrong? Is there something on my face?”

Ichika laughed with a ‘kuhu’ and rubbed her nose. Hana patted Ichika’s waist.

“…I think Hikari-chan wants you to just move past this topic!”

“Ah, okay okay.”

Hana whispered to Ichika, but it was all audible due to the born 3-star magical girl’s hearing.

“Shall we take the subway?”

“No! Mom said she’d come pick us up by car!”

“Oh really? Where is she waiting?”

“In the parking lot over there. She told me to let her know when Hikari-chan comes out!”

Hana tapped her smartphone a few times and answered cheerfully.

“She said she’ll pick us up at exit 5!”

“I see, thank you, Hana-chan.”

“Mm-hmm! It’s natural because Hikari-chan is my friend!”

Squeeze

Feeling pressure on my sleeve again, I turned around to see Yuki looking at me with restless eyes.

‘Ichika and Hana are my friends, but Yuki doesn’t have much connection with them…’

In the original work, Ichika was a supporting character who appeared to express the brutal atmosphere of Japan, and Hana wasn’t even mentioned.

It’s like going to a university club room with a friend and then the friend leaves to smoke. If I had to compare, Yuki’s current situation would be like that.

‘I’ve never experienced it because I didn’t have friends.’

Understanding Yuki’s awkwardness, I gently held her hand and also held Hana’s hand with my other hand.

“Thank you all for coming. Mrs. Sato is waiting, so let’s go together!”

“Yay!”

“Hikari…!”

Yuki looked at me with slightly moved eyes.

“Huh? If I read the mood, this is the position where I should get a piggyback ride, right?”

Seeing Ichika grinning mischievously, I shifted my backpack to the front and bent down slightly. Ichika ran over with a patter, her ponytail swaying, and jumped on my back.

“Heave-ho, here we go!”

“It’s a bit embarrassing, so let’s go quickly.”

It was such an intense piggyback that my back might have given out if I had my original body, but the body of a born 3-star magical girl handled it easily.

“Pfft, what is this!”

“Ahahahaha!!”

“Hehe…”

We left the airport looking like a strange Bremen Town Musicians, and I could feel people around us watching our appearance with warm smiles.

‘Ever since awakening cause and effect reversal, I can sensitively feel the mental images of those around me even when I don’t want to.’

It was a bit painful when I felt mental images I didn’t particularly want to feel, but I’ve gotten somewhat used to it over the past 3 months.

As we exited through gate 5 in our strange appearance, Mrs. Sato’s car was right in front.

“Hello! I heard you’d be picking us up. Thank you so much.”

“Hoho, it’s nothing. Of course I would when Shirogane-san is here!”

“Huh, I’m sitting in the front.”

“Eh, Ichika always sits in the front!”

Ichika quickly sat in the passenger seat, and in the back seat, Hana sat in the innermost seat, then me, and finally Yuki who got in hesitantly.

“Hehe, Hikari… actually, this is my first time at an airport. It was amazing.”

“Really?”

“Yeah… I’ve never been in my whole life… and… the airport

disappeared because of various incidents.”

“Ah, that’s right.”

“…Was I too much of a country bumpkin?”

I whispered a reply to Yuki’s sudden words as she fidgeted uncomfortably.

“It would have been my first time too if not for this incident.”

Incheon Airport, Narita Airport, Brussels Airport, Beijing Airport, Gimhae Airport, all of them.

Yuki’s eyes widened slightly at that, then she smiled broadly. Hana tilted her head looking at Yuki like that, then started dozing off again.

‘Hana seems to be the type to fall asleep right away in cars.’

Japanese radio was playing in the car, and outside the window I could see signs in Japanese and roads going in the opposite direction from Korea.

‘…I’m back. To the place I first came to.’

I had forgotten for a moment because of all the things I’d been doing going between Korea, Europe, and China, but <Magical Girl HAZARD> hasn’t even started yet.

Now that I think about how we’ve barely reached the starting point, I felt deflated and looked out the window.

Cars passing on the road.

The road leaving the airport.

‘…Come to think of it, since it’s Wednesday, the cafe would be open.’

“Oh, Shirogane-san, Master asked me to let him know when you arrive!”

“Huh? Master did?”

“Yes! Kyoko-chan and Master said they’d prepare a welcome dinner party at the cafe when Shirogane-san arrives!”

That Kyoko… did she master even the cafe’s meal menu in just 3 months of being there? What a terrifying talent.

‘…It took me a year to get that far.’

I felt a slight sense of inferiority rising.

“I already sent a message.”

Ichika, who had been fiddling with her phone in the front seat, said nonchalantly.

“What about Yuki?”

“Huh?”

“What do you want to do, Yuki?”

“The cafe…? Is it okay for me to go? Isn’t it a place run by Hikari’s acquaintance?”

Yuki asked back, tilting her head.

“It might be a place you know too, Yuki.”

“…Huh?”

Yuki thought for a moment, then looked at me in surprise.

“No way…?!”

“Yes.”

Squeeze

Yuki habitually grasped my sleeve and showed agitated eyes.

The place where Yuki received somewhat humane treatment when she returned to Japan from the domain of death in the original work.

…And the place that was tragically destroyed after the appearance of the trial demons.

It was that cafe where I used to work now.

“It’s okay.”

“…”

“It’ll be fine.”

“…Okay.”

Yuki, who had been a bit startled, seemed to have calmed down as the grip on my sleeve loosened slightly.

“Let’s go together. Master will surely welcome you warmly.”

“…Okay.”

Yuki calmed down while lightly holding my hand.

Her hand was very cold.

“…”

“…”

Mrs. Sato and Ichika glanced at us, seeming to pretend not to notice Yuki’s bewilderment. It’s understandable for Mrs. Sato, but Ichika isn’t actually oblivious, so I wonder why she sometimes acts so foolishly?

Our car drove past Narita Airport to Yokohama where the cafe is located.

In front of the cafe we finally arrived at, Kyoko was standing with her orange bridge-colored hair fluttering, wearing Master’s signature black apron over her waitress uniform.

“Leader! I have become the official successor of this cafe!”

“…What?! Really?! No way!!”

I couldn't get out of the green apprentice apron for 2 years!

I was so surprised that I looked at Master, but Master gave me a look as if to say 'Why are you asking about something so obvious?'

"…Welcome back."

"Is it really true, Master?!"

"…She had talent. I'm getting on in years too, you know."

"But no matter how you look at it, Kyoko?!"

"She's much better than you. She's about to get additional confectionery and baking certifications too."

…Overcome by an inexplicable sense of defeat, I trembled for a while, unable to enter the cafe.

3 months.

In just 3 months, she surpassed my 2 years of experience.

Damn it.

Chapter 62 : The Great Chaotic Christmas Operation

Ding-a-ling

As I opened the cafe's front door, the bell that Master said he brought back from Denmark in his youth rang with a dull sound.

'I feel like I'll never forget this bell sound.'

For me, that dull bell sound was a trace of the daily life I experienced over the past 2 years.

A sound that automatically makes you turn around when a customer comes.

A sound that made the extraordinary experience of reincarnation into another world feel ordinary.

Hearing that sound, Yuki seemed to recall something too, as a faint yet warm mental image flowed from her.

"…It's been a while."

"Right?"

I smiled as I looked at Yuki like that.

The night view of Yokohama Port was spread out like the Milky Way outside the cafe's window, and the soft light of indirect lighting rising towards the ceiling warmly enveloped the prepared food.

"Wow! There's so much delicious food, Hikari-chan!"

Hana sat down in front of the large table laden with various dishes, wagging her side ponytail like a puppy's tail.

“Thank you for your hard work on the long journey.”

“Hoho, this much is fine for Shirogane-san’s arrival.”

Mrs. Sato and Master were exchanging greetings and talking about year-end plans, while Ichika was leisurely looking at the food with her hands in her sukajan pockets.

“Leader, Leader! I have something to show you.”

Kyoko poked me and brought out an omelet she had briefly put on the counter, with a mischievous smile.

“Wait, no way…?! You’ve already reached that level…?!”

“Fuhuhu… well, I didn’t know I had such talent for cooking.”

Kyoko flipped her orange bridge-colored hair and cut the middle of the omelet with a knife she took from the cupboard.

Drip

From the flawlessly clear yellow omelet like starlight, the slightly undercooked egg part poured out, forming a yellow flower precisely in the empty part of the plate.

Exact temperature.

Exact time.

Exact technique.

A special omelet that can only be completed when these three elements come together perfectly.

It was a cafe lunch set menu item that I had only managed to successfully make this spring.

“…I can do that too, you know? Anyone can do that much?”

“Fuhuhu, I heard everything from Master. The success rate is less than 20%.”

“…I succeed two out of five times.”

“Ah… you mean counting those slightly burnt ones as successes?”

“…”

Kyoko smiled with genuine pride. And that touched the 2-year-old pride seated within me.

‘To lose to a private in my specialty after eating the rank of sergeant.’

I have cause and effect reversal.

Just you wait, rookie.

[Deception] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Cause and Effect Reversal

I was about to take out the green apron while holding the frying pan, but Master called out from behind in an incredulous voice.

“What are you getting competitive for? Kyoko is better anyway.”

“No, I can really do well now.”

“Hahahahaha! That’s really funny! Truly the excuse of the weak!”

“…Hikari. Stop doing useless things and go eat.”

“…Just let me try once.”

“Puhahahahaha! You’ll probably end up overcooking it all the way through, so you might as well bring rice and make egg sushi!”

Hearing Kyoko’s words, Master’s mouth twitched as he took off his apron and headed towards the table set with food.

“Ah~ Next month when I have time, I should learn sushi too!”

Kyoko walked away with a smug smile, swishing her skirt hem. Moving her slender legs proudly and lightly.

Click click

"…"

I stood there for a while, dumbfounded, holding the frying pan and apron inside the cafe bar.

"Hikari-chan! The omelet Kyoko made is super delicious! Come eat!"

"…I can make it too."

"Pfft."

Hearing those words, Master finally burst out laughing.

"Hmm…? You mean the 'rolled egg' the Leader makes?"

"Pfft, puhahaha!"

It was rare for Master to laugh so heartily.

Master, you traitor!

"D-don't laugh, Master! I'm still your senior, you know!"

"Heh, hehehehehehe!! What? Senior? Hahahahaha!!"

"Hmph… I don't remember having a 'senior'."

Kyoko narrowed her eyes and crossed her legs with an alluring smile. Her seductive pose highlighting her healthy thighs was…

'What's this? Why does she look so confident? How come the slow-witted Kyoko looks like a beautiful girl?'

Kyoko, who always had a bit of a lack of confidence and seemed dimwitted with her stupid-sounding way of speaking, was now exuding a strange atmosphere with her confident smile.

'Hmm, her stupid way of speaking is still the same though.'

The simple Kyoko's only things to boast about would be her cooking skills and…

Ah, this girl.

“Did you bloom? No wonder you suddenly got good at cooking.”

So it was the blooming boost, this girl.

No wonder she couldn’t beat me so easily.

“Fuhuhu…! Actually, my blooming is… no, I’ll just show you!”

Wink

Kyoko winked at me and stood up, shouting.

“Trans…!”

“Do it after we eat, after we eat.”

“Ah, yes…”

And she quietly sat down again at Ichika’s words.

“Here, Hikari. I prepared some for you in advance.”

Yuki handed me a plate with small portions of food, smiling broadly.

“Thanks, Yuki.”

We ate for a while, enjoying the quiet atmosphere of the cafe.

Clink

Ichika quietly munched on a sandwich in one hand and drank some ade.

“Now, here’s a special menu we only offer to our regular customers.”

Master melted a large raclette cheese with a hot knife and scraped it onto the potatoes and meat in front of Mrs. Sato and Hana.

“Fufu, thank you.”

“Wow… thank you.”

“…”

Yuki was looking at the inside of the cafe and the still brilliantly shining night view of Yokohama with moist eyes next to me.

“Thank you for the meal!”

After eating dinner in the cafe like that, we came out for a bit and walked through the darkening Yokohama.

“We adults will enjoy some leisure time, so go for a walk or something.”

Master had somehow brought out expensive wine and beef jerky.

“Don’t go too far～”

The Sato couple, who had enjoyed the party with Mr. Sato joining after work, seemed to plan on leaving their car in front of the cafe as they started enjoying wine in earnest.

Whoosh

Yuki, Ichika, Kyoko, Hana, and I strolled along the evening sea of Yokohama where the cold winter wind was blowing.

Shimmering droplets and colorless magic above the darkening sky.

The sound of waves in the distance.

Faint streetlights illuminating the path ahead.

When I suddenly turned around while walking ahead, Ichika was snickering while grabbing the flustered Yuki, and Hana and Kyoko were chattering about something interesting they seemed to have found in the garden.

“…”

Oh right.

“By the way, Kyoko. You said you bloomed, but what ability did you get?”

“Oh right, transform!”

Whoosh!

An orange light passed by and…

Bloomed born 1-star magical girl of [Cheer]

Kyoko

Kyoko was now wearing an orange cheerleader outfit reminiscent of a cheerleader and holding a large orange flag.

“My dream was! To become a reliable support who sustains the Leader! The Boss! Everyone!”

Bang!

As she struck the flag once, orange light sparkled around and gave strength to us nearby.

It was a support-type magic reminiscent of Laura, Li Meilin, or Park Saebyeok.

“How is it! My confident appearance!”

She was wearing white boots that came up to her ankles under the orange lace-trimmed skirt that fluttered, and the top was a daring sleeveless cheerleader uniform that revealed her navel and shoulders.

In a word…

“You look really cold.”

“Yeah. Aren’t you cold, Kyoko?”

“Ugh, Kyoko you pervert! There’s too much exposure!”

“…”

Looking dejected, Kyoko eventually undid her transformation and returned to her waitress uniform.

…Huh? Wasn't it a production-type ability?

"Wait, hold on. Then what about the cooking? The coffee? That's not your ability?"

"…Eh? It's not. That's just something I'm good at."

Liar!

"Don't lie!! [Cheer] is a cooking ability!!"

"Hmm? What's this? Could it be… the magical girl of [Beginning] is jealous of my talent?"

Hmph.

Kyoko provoked me, narrowing her eyes.

"Let's have a rematch! Omelet! I can really succeed in one try this time!"

"Hehe, Leader… it's a bit unsightly to go that far."

"Hikari-chan… your pride is hurt, huh."

"N-no, it's not."

"Well, it was shocking that Kyoko unexpectedly overflowed with talent in cooking."

"Boss?! What do you mean by 'unexpectedly'?!"

Pat pat

Yuki, who had been quiet for a while, suddenly patted my shoulder and whispered in my ear.

"Um, about that flag. Isn't it the one the [Leader of FLAG] carries around?"

"…What?"

FLAG.

The magical girl rebel group led by Ichika.

Originally, it should have been born around this time after Sumire's first blooming…

'Ah.'

In Volume 1's illustration of Ichika, there was an orange flag.

That's why the group name was FLAG.

'Right, the flag of freedom that Ichika raised wasn't a metaphorical expression.'

…But Kyoko didn't exist beside her.

Yet Ichika carried Kyoko's unique weapon. While wearing an utterly brutal expression.

'No way… originally, at this point in time, Kyoko…'

I felt a chill for a moment.

"…"

"…"

Yuki and I couldn't say anything for a while.

"What's wrong, Leader? Shikishima's expression is all stiff too."

"…It's nothing."

"Yeah. We just had something to say for a moment."

"Is that so?"

Ichika spoke to Kyoko again, and we resumed our walk through Yokohama.

"Christmas is coming soon."

"Yeah."

“That’s right.”

“…We should do it, right?”

“Do what?”

I looked at Ichika at those sudden words. Ichika grinned and answered while waving both hands.

“A Christmas party!”

“Ooh!”

“Oooh!”

Kyoko and Hana suddenly cheered at Ichika’s words.

“Let’s all gather at our apartment and have a party again! Let’s invite everyone we can!!”

“Yeah yeah! Good! I want to go too!”

“Boss! Leave the food to me!!”

“Let’s buy a cake too!!”

“Woohooo!!”

These kids… are so lively.

Still, it was better to see them having a party at a friend’s house rather than being confined in a research facility.

“What do you want to do, Yuki?”

“Huh? Me? Can I come too?”

“Of course. Yuki is my friend.”

I fixed Yuki’s scarf that had loosened a bit from the sea breeze.

‘Oops, that’s the habit of taking care of Hana.’

I glanced at Yuki's expression. It was a natural action that came out due to the habit of taking care of Hana, but Yuki was just quietly watching.

"…Okay."

"Then all the magical girls here are participating, right?"

Ichika said, clenching her fist.

"I guess so."

"Woohoo! Christmas party!"

"Oh, it's burning up!"

"Cake, cake!"

"…It's my first time having a Christmas party with friends."

Watching their brightly smiling faces.

I let go of one tragedy that might have happened, beyond my heart.

Because it was a past that only Yuki and I knew in this world, and now we could just forget it.

Chapter 63 : The Great Chaotic Christmas Operation

December 23rd

"…"

"Hikari! I've been waiting!"

Yuki closed the wooden gate and ran towards me in the red coat I had seen before. As mentioned in the story, her habit of drying her hair all at once with flame magic after bathing seemed to persist, as the ends of her short hair were damaged and sticking up.

"So Yuki's house is in Ota."

"Yeah… I've always wanted to come back since I left."

The house where the Shikishima father and daughter lived was in Ota Ward, the southernmost district of Tokyo. It's an area with many ordinary residential neighborhoods and some wealthy areas with luxury mansions near the station.

…And there's Haneda Airport.

Just a 20-minute subway ride from Shibuya where I live.

A place I passed by every day while commuting to Yokohama by subway.

Now that I actually came here, I was momentarily dazed by the futility of realizing I had been living so close to the original work's protagonist.

'I even booked a flight ticket to Narita Airport arriving from Incheon instead of Gimpo.'

I had wandered around Shinjuku and Shibuya where Yuki first appears in the original work, but unintentionally avoided Ota which is terribly far south in Tokyo.

‘Now that I know the location, it really feels futile…’

Although the exact place name where Yuki lives doesn’t appear in the original work, it was an area that could be guessed by drawing a straight line between Shinjuku and Yokohama, which appeared as Yuki’s main destinations. If I had thoroughly searched the areas along that straight line for 2 years, I might have heard rumors about a ‘female student who was burned and then healed after becoming a magical girl’.

‘…Still, I couldn’t have predicted that Yuki would return through regression.’

Even if I had luckily found Yuki, it was this November that Yuki returned with memories of the original work. If I had met and become close to Yuki before that, but those memories were overwritten by Yuki’s post-ending memories unaware of the past I had changed…

‘I would have gone back to being a stranger to Yuki whom I had become close with, just like with Sato Hana now.’

Shudder

I pushed aside the chilling imagination that briefly surfaced.

“I was living so close to Yuki.”

“Yeah, I was surprised too. That Hikari was living in Shibuya.”

“Shibuya? Why Shibuya?”

“Ah… um… well… um… that’s…”

Yuki seemed to have unconsciously blurted out those words, and unable to recover, her face turned slightly pale as she broke into a cold sweat and darted her eyes around.

‘Ah, it must be a place with bad memories.’

After I mentioned knowing about Yuki’s actions from next year onwards, she seemed reluctant to open up about her shabby past of growing distant from her father and being bullied at school. She always had difficulty talking when related topics came up.

‘I lived a pretty shabby past too so it’s fine, but… if I say I know about Yuki’s past too, it might shock her even more.’

This was Yuki’s complex that was difficult to heal with simple empathy.

In the original work’s ending, Yuki had merely become accustomed to fighting. There was no gentleness there to help her grow mentally or make her stronger.

‘Yuki is a child with many wounds and pains, so as a friend, there must be things she doesn’t want to talk about.’

This is the fault of the world that pushed her into tragedy without giving her time to grow. I hope the time comes when she can bring up stories on her own.

I forcibly changed the topic to be considerate of the troubled Yuki.

“…Did your father go to work?”

“Huh? Oh, yeah, Dad! He’s regained his confidence lately! He’s working at an acquaintance’s pottery workshop again! He’s starting over as an assistant since he took a 5-year break.”

“That’s too bad… I wanted to greet him if he was here.”

The protagonist’s parent, no less.

As Yuki’s friend and a fan of the original work, I wanted to meet and greet him at least once. The original story begins with denying his death and heading towards [Death]’s domain, but this time would be different.

When I looked to the side as it suddenly got quiet, Yuki was staring

at me with wide eyes.

“…”

“Yuki?”

“Hm?”

“Why are you looking at me like that? …Did, did I do something wrong?”

“…It’s nothing.”

For the Christmas party, we decided to randomly exchange gifts with each other.

Nine girls spending peaceful daily lives while the memories at the edge of their consciousness of the research facility were fading, Haruko who had transferred schools after her probation period ended, and the organizers Ichika, Kyoko, and Hana.

Including me and Yuki, it would be a party with as many as 15 people gathering.

‘Sumire would be uncomfortable with most of the group, and it’s awkward to ask Dorim or Park Saebyeok, who know my identity, to come all the way to Japan.’

I brought it up with Master and the Sato couple too, but Master just laughed heartily.

“Not necessary. You kids have fun on your own.”

Sato Hana declared that she wanted to enjoy a party with friends all day on Christmas rather than spending it with family, like the housewarming party. Hearing that, the Sato couple declined my invitation offer with slightly shy smiles and quietly asked me to take care of Hana while giving me some pocket money.

‘Maybe Hana will have a younger sibling soon…’

I heard the Sato family, who had set their Christmas schedule, would

be spending intimate family time today.

“A gift? I’ll just pick something from the prizes I got last time. Should I set aside Kyoko’s share too?”

“Th-that would be much appreciated… I spent quite a bit on winter clothes…”

Ichika and Kyoko said they would just put in something from the gift package Ichika received as a prize from the friendly match and were resting at home.

-Heheh, I’ve already bought my gift so I’ll bring it to the party.

I heard Haruko was continuing a smooth and quiet school life at the school she transferred to, and that she’s been attending an art academy since October this year to pursue her dream of becoming a manga artist.

In the end, among those living in Tokyo, only Yuki and I came out to buy gifts.

“Then let’s go buy gifts, Yuki.”

“Yeah! Sounds good!”

Yuki and I took the subway to Shinjuku Station.

But Shinjuku right before Christmas was literally bursting with people.

“Welcome!! It’s our pre-Christmas sale!!”

“Cakes! Buy your cakes here!”

“Wow, looks like magical girls are performing over there.”

“Heave-ho! Rise up, Christmas tree!!”

“Please donate blood, everyone!”

Merchants shouted themselves hoarse while selling goods in Santa costumes.

People were already enjoying the Christmas atmosphere arm in arm with their lovers.

Performance-type magical girls showed off their specialties on the streets and the security team monitored them.

The relief corps rang bells and campaigned to encourage blood donations and volunteer activities.

Year-end special advertisements on the intersection's electronic display boards intertwined with the taillights of passing cars. They were emitting red light, creating an end-of-year atmosphere throughout the streets.

The red light wavering in people's breath seemed to enter our hearts.

Yuki spoke while cupping her cheeks that had turned red from the cold.

"Whoa, there are so many people. Shinjuku really is crowded."

"Yeah… if I had known it would be like this, we should have come out yesterday."

"It probably would have been similar yesterday too?"

"Still, it must have been less crowded than this."

"Phew… what should we do?"

…I wonder if we'll even be able to buy gifts at this rate.

Department stores and gift shops were so packed that queues dozens of meters long had formed.

I took out my smartphone that I still hadn't activated and was using as a watch and Wi-Fi receiver.

3:21 PM.

Did we come out too late? Damn it.

Yuki seemed pleased that I was using the smartphone she had given

me well, glancing at it before exclaiming.

“Ah, you still haven’t activated it?”

“I’ve only been back in Japan for 2 days.”

“Ugh, I didn’t mean to make you feel bad… sorry.”

Squeeze

Yuki fidgeted slightly and grabbed the sleeve of my coat.

“Hmm.”

As I fiddled with the smartphone still in airplane mode since I had just returned from abroad, an idea came to mind.

‘The time difference between Belgium and Japan is 8 hours, right? I should be able to use the warp gate I worked so hard to install.’

I still had plenty of money left in my wallet that I had exchanged when I went to install the warp gate in Belgium.

As I fell silent for a moment, Yuki gripped my sleeve even tighter and said:

“A-are you really angry? I, I was just asking, I’m sorry if I upset you!”

“Yuki.”

“Yeah?”

“Let’s go abroad.”

“What?!”

* * *

“W-wow. We really came.”

Yuki, who had followed Hikari in her [Beginning] magical girl outfit through the warp gate after entering the domain, covered in camouflage magic, was fidgeting nervously.

Brussels, Belgium, where they arrived, was just past 7 AM, 8 hours behind Tokyo, Japan, and the ornate 15th-century style roofs of the Grand Place were shining white, dazzlingly reflecting the morning sunlight.

Bumpy and uneven.

For Yuki, who had lived her whole life in Japan and was seeing a street composed entirely of such foreign architecture for the first time, that was the only way she could describe the appearance of the Grand Place.

“Even so, it’s not crowded with people from the morning.”

Hikari, who had somehow changed back into civilian clothes with something like a silver earphone in one ear, was confidently guiding Yuki.

“There’s a souvenir shop I spotted while coming and going for the warp gate and Grand Council, and it seems to open from the morning. Let’s go there together, Yuki.”

“O-okay.”

Yuki was just holding onto the money Hikari had casually handed her to use freely and gripping one sleeve as she followed.

The souvenir shop they arrived at, located in a corner of the square, had notices written in all sorts of languages saying it would be closed for over a week after tomorrow’s Christmas holiday, and the shop staff were busily doing morning cleaning. Fortunately, since it was morning, there were no people, so they could easily enter the shop.

‘I can’t even speak English properly, what should I do.’

Inside the shop were various souvenirs in shapes hard to see in Japan on display, and Yuki, frozen at the sight, just followed behind Hikari.

‘Hikari is amazing. I ended up accomplishing nothing in the end, but in just half a year, she’s become accustomed to traveling around the world and doing various things.’

What kind of influence could this amazing Hikari have received from me?

What did she see in my shabby self who was just desperate to survive?

“Yuki! How about this?”

“Huh? Oh, it’s cute!”

Hikari gently moved her long eyelashes as she showed Yuki things like dolls or blankets in the shop.

“Ugh, it’s terribly expensive.”

Hikari grumbled something as she went further into the shop after checking the price of a bear doll holding a Belgian flag.

Yuki absentmindedly picked up various things again before suddenly noticing one item.

The gift would be given to anyone by lottery, so there was no guarantee it would go to Hikari, but.

‘Even so, if Hikari could receive it… the price is reasonable too…’

Yuki carefully picked up that item.

Chapter 64 : The Great Chaotic Christmas Operation

December 24th

“Merry Christmas!”

“Cheers!”

Glasses filled with cola or orange juice clinked together, making a refreshing sound.

We managed to squeeze 15 girls into the small room, but eating was too much, so we just did a toast.

“Heheh, it’s been a really long time since I’ve been here.”

“Busujima-san! I heard you’re attending an art academy these days? What are you learning?”

“This place is still as cold as ever～”

“Wow, was this apartment always this small?”

“Hn, it’s because there are more people than back then.”

“Kyoko-chan… I didn’t notice in the summer, but your clothing taste is a bit…”

“Aren’t you cold dressed like that, Kyoko-chan?”

“Leave me alone! This is the cutest for me!”

The sound of 15 girls chattering all at once had an intensity closer to a roar than mere noise. I thought I was used to such noise from housewarming parties or debutantes, but.

‘During the debutante preparation, the atmosphere was subdued due to shock, and at the housewarming, not everyone was gathered, I guess.’

For Christmas, we managed to gather everyone by breaking through the queue of magical girls crowding the warp gate wanting to go far away. The girls who achieved this miraculous success were in high spirits, and consequently, their voice volumes had risen tremendously.

Clang clang

Ichika tapped a frying pan with a spoon and said:

“Alright, alright! Attention! I know the mood is high, but! It’s impossible for 15 people to eat here!”

“We’ll split into groups of 7 or 8 and eat in the Leader’s room and here!”

“How should we divide?”

“Those who want to go to the Leader’s room, raise your hands!”

Swish

I naturally wanted to eat in my room, so I raised my hand.

As soon as they saw that, Hana and Yuki raised their hands high.

Haruko saw that and belatedly raised her hand.

“Sato-san, remember us? Let’s eat together!”

“It’s been a while, sisters!”

“Ah, are you betraying us?”

“We’ve been here last time, so now you should play with Ichika-chan～”

“Oh, then it’s decided! Let’s set up now!”

The four who had participated in the housewarming party joined my room. Along with me, Hana, Yuki, and Haruko, a total of 8 people gathered.

“Sato-san! We brought the wool dolls we made this time too.”

“Wow, a blue seal! It’s cute!”

“It was unexpected that Kyoko-chan is so good at cooking.”

“And it was unexpected that her winter clothes sense is so bad…”

“Ah～ This place really hasn’t changed.”

At Haruko’s wistful words, I made some excuses.

“I’ve been busy these past few months too, I just paid the rent in advance and left it empty.”

Hearing that, the group replied with sparkling eyes:

“Oh right. Shirogane-san has been amazing these past few months!”

“The legend of the magical girl of [Beginning] traveling around the world…!”

“It really feels like a dream… even though we didn’t participate like Ichika or Kyoko.”

“I really didn’t tell anyone. I wanted to keep it to myself…”

“Well, even if we said we know [Beginning], no one would believe us anyway.”

“Ahahahaha!”

Hearing that, Hana and Yuki joined in too.

“Yeah! It’s amazing! Hikari-chan has always been shining!”

“That’s right. Hikari is… really an amazing person.”

What’s this?

What's wrong with you guys.

Why are you suddenly praising me.

"To think we're having a Christmas party with the magical girl of [Beginning]… when will we ever have such an opportunity again."

"I never dreamed I'd get to know such an incredibly famous person like this!"

"Yeah! Yeah! Hikari-chan is really amazing and cool!"

"Sato-san…! It's really just as you say."

"Heheh! I'm working on a manga called <The Legend of the Magical Girl of Light>! It's truly legendary!"

Yuki and Hana held hands and started exchanging my wonderful points one by one. It was enough to make my head spin if I listened to each one.

'Haruko, what on earth are you creating?'

I tried to make excuses to escape this scene of madness.

"I, I'll go out for a bit and get food from Ichika."

"Huh? Ahahaha! Shirogane-san's face has turned completely red!"

"Ahahahaha!"

"She's cute!"

I hurriedly went out to the apartment corridor to escape the girls' mad praise that was starting to spread again.

Phew.

The cold winter wind brushing my face cooled me down. A mental image of happiness flowed abundantly from the girls enjoying the party with sounds echoing all the way to the apartment corridor.

As I was moving to get food from Ichika, I saw a strange sight.

The rent envelope that hadn't disappeared in front of the door.

"Hm? The rent envelope isn't empty?"

I had forgotten about it because it's an envelope that's collected like clockwork on the 1st of every month…

I definitely met Ichika in the domain at the end of November and handed over the exact amount in cash.

It was the first time this had happened since I paid my first rent after starting part-time work at Master's shop in the year I first fell into this world, so I was flustered.

Tick

Suddenly, something inside me snapped and I felt a sense of discomfort.

A sense of discomfort felt as soon as I saw the white envelope that hadn't disappeared.

Huh.

'Come to think of it, why did I take this for granted for 3 years?'

I had only been slightly suspicious but passed it off as natural.

The rent payment method where cash envelopes hung on the door disappear without any sign of presence. An apartment located in a place so quiet it's strange to anyone.

'In this world where supernatural abilities and transcendent beings exist, why did I just pass this by?'

Ichika and Kyoko had only been living here for 4 months, and I had been accepting it so calmly as the one living here first, so that's understandable, but…

Something.

Something was rearranging in my mind as puzzle pieces surfaced.

Like someone trapped in a maze unintentionally escaping and climbing a hill to grasp the structure.

Taking things I had accepted as natural as unnatural.

Connecting several things I had considered completely unrelated.

Even if it's a delusion.

This world is the world that appears in <Magical Girl HAZARD>.

The time when the rent envelope didn't disappear: Early December;

The last impressive event that happened: I met with Yuki;

Where the apartment is: Shibuya;

Original work protagonist: Shikishima Yuki;

Where Yuki originally lives: Ota in southern Tokyo.

Where Yuki appeared after January next year: Shinjuku in central Tokyo.

When Yuki ran away, she naturally went to central Tokyo areas rather than southern Tokyo areas.

Even when she came out to run away, she says she missed her father who came looking for her because their areas of movement were different.

The Yuki I've observed over the past month only travels familiar routes due to her personality.

'Is it simply because she became familiar with the routes after running away for a few months?'

No.

Yuki has bad memories of the past in Shibuya even before becoming a magical girl.

Yuki and Shibuya have been connected since before she became a

magical girl, and that's probably…

"Huh? Leader, what are you doing? Standing blankly in the corridor."

My train of thought was momentarily scattered. Ichika was moving plates of party food.

"Oh… nothing."

…It's just a hypothesis forcibly tying together what I guessed from Yuki's story yesterday and how I would have 'acted according to the given situation' if I had come to this world, but it gave me slight chills.

"Ichika."

"Hm?"

"Since when did they stop collecting the rent envelope?"

"Huh? Oh right. They didn't collect December's rent for our room either? But maybe they just *forgot.*"

Scratch

Ichika brushed it off as if it wasn't a big deal.

"Yeah… that could be it."

Or it might not be.

* * *

After the meal time, the much-anticipated gift exchange took place.

"Ahahaha! What's this! It really doesn't suit me!"

Ichika put on sleep socks made of pink yarn. It was hard to say they suited Ichika, who usually wears mostly green, even as a white lie. But she seemed to like them more because of that.

"Wow! I wanted to read this manga!"

Hana received what was clearly a set of shonen manga volumes prepared by Haruko and started reading them one by one.

Everyone was enjoying receiving gifts according to the lots they drew.

And in my hand was…

Swish

As I shook the snow globe once, 'snow' fluttered inside the glass ball that was a miniature replica of Brussels' square.

"Wow! H-Hikari really drew it…"

Yuki seemed pleased watching me.

Just before drawing the lot, I secretly used cause and effect reversal to gauge the possibilities.

The possibility of me drawing Yuki's lot as judged by the world… 9 out of 10 times.

"…"

"When we went to Belgium, I just thought you might like it. Hehe."

"Hey, Yuki."

"Yeah?"

"Did you go to… [Shibuya East Girls' Middle School]?"

"…?!"

Yuki's eyes were shaking violently.

Nod

Yuki quietly nodded while grasping the hem of her skirt.

Memories of bullying, painful days.

The school she entered after going far out of her way to avoid schools near her home.

The anxiety that I might have found out about it.

Everything was revealed on Yuki's face, which was still in an unstable state.

"I see. I just asked in case you happened to go to a school nearby."

"…Huh? R-really?"

Yuki's face visibly relaxed.

"Shikishima-san! Haven't you opened the gift I gave you yet? Let's open it together!"

"Ah, yes!"

Yuki left my side to go open gifts at the group's call.

"…"

I quietly took out the student ID that had been in my hand on the first day I came to this world from my pocket.

[Shibuya East Girls' Middle School]

[Shirogane Hikari]

If I had not had Sim Hyun-woo's memories but had opened my eyes in this world for the first time as Hikari…

Would I have met Yuki at this school as Hikari?

Would I have moved to return to my mother and save people?

The fate of Yuki and me, strangely strongly attracted after connecting once.

A rail laid by someone from the moment I awoke to make me meet Yuki.

That rail was twisted by Sim Hyun-woo's choice, and in a different form, I ended up facing Yuki as Sim Hyun-woo much later.

'Originally I tried to go back in 5 years, but I was surprised to come 2 years before that…'

I awoke 3 years before the point Yuki returned to.

'Should I consider this a coincidence?'

Swish

As I shook the snow globe and watched the snow flutter, I was silent for a moment.

* * *

A space so full of starlight that the night sky and ground were indistinguishable due to the water gently covering the floor.

There, a girl wearing clothes made of white cloth and a large hood was dipping her snow-white feet and looking at the sky.

Swish

As the girl lowered her hood, dazzlingly shining silver hair fell down.

According to the prophecy of the 'Goddess Religion' passed down for generations, one girl born 16 years before the year of destruction is confined in a white room from birth.

A divine maiden born with a spirit dwelling in a body that has learned nothing and has no emotions.

Those who receive the teachings of the 'Goddess Religion', which has been passed down since the beginning of humanity on a small island, respected her as the 'representative of god'.

"…The one who continues the first lie has completely undone the guidance of causality and was wary. Now I can't do anything."

The divine maiden gradually stopped her power to manipulate the

world.

“She was originally someone who stood on her own will, but to think she would avoid the given fate to this extent…”

Unlike [War], [Plague], and [Death] that dwell in girls with the potential to lead humanity to destruction, what was given to the divine maiden was the goddess’s command.

[When the one who continues the lie created by the first goddess awakens, ensure that the flame returned from destruction can hear all the details of the trials.]

That was the only task given to the divine maiden.

The goddess of [Beginning], the only one among the four goddesses overseeing the trial who believes in humanity’s success and wants to put them to the test.

The goddess who became the sacrifice for the trial by burning herself because she was the only one who believed in success.

Following that goddess’s words, the divine maiden tried to connect the fate for [Deception] and [Flame] to meet as strongly as possible within the limits allowed by the world.

“…But [Deception] shook all of that off and moved in her own way.”

Pioneering a fate unknown even to the divine maiden.

“Why?”

The divine maiden, who occupied the body of an emotionless idiot, did not know human emotions and will that could not be simply divided by fate.

Therefore, she could only quietly watch the story unfold in a different direction than she had intended.

Chapter 65 : The Puppet Show on Frozen Land

January 17, 2012

“What… is this?!”

“What do you mean? It’s an airborne aircraft carrier.”

Kang Dorim, looking slightly haggard, answered my question nonchalantly, but undisguisable pride seeped through.

“It’s the demon countermeasure decisive battle ship… Sirius!”

A gray and silver castle floating above the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Headquarters.

Like the airship that the magical girl of [Bombing] obtained upon full blooming, it was an enormous power that only magical girls connected to the world could possess. The sky castle that had boasted an elegant appearance like something out of a fairy tale until recently had transformed into a silver ship that could appear in a sci-fi movie.

An overwhelming size equivalent to a multi-story building laid horizontally.

An elegant silver body based on flowing curves with minimal protrusions.

Starlight emitted by magical girls endlessly sparkling as they came and went.

“This is… wow… incredible.”

“Is this where Korean magical girls go now?”

“Wow, amazing… even compared to the warp gates or the Garden…”

Even magical girls from other countries visiting for support or requests could only stare blankly, pressed against the headquarters’ windows, and exclaim in admiration.

Click click

Spectators gathered below the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Headquarters after hearing rumors were all gaping and frantically taking photos.

I too felt my heart pounding at every word Dorim uttered.

Airborne.

Flying in the sky.

Aircraft.

It has carrier-based aircraft.

Carrier.

An incredibly large ship.

“You… Dorim, you… you’re really the best!”

“Hmph, I may be completely useless in combat, but there’s no limit to what I can create.”

It was truly, really cool enough to make my heart flutter.

As I looked at the silver ship floating majestically like a huge space battleship, I imagined a scene.

When a moment of crisis comes to a place difficult to reach with helping hands through warp gates.

The silver ship revealing itself in the sky, removing its illusion curtain.

Magical girls leaping out of the ship to subdue the attacking demons.

Magical girls who have honed their strength in preparation for destruction skillfully handle the demons.

Demons trying to attack the ship are intercepted by the White Wing 2nd Platoon specialized in aerial movement and emission-type magical girls riding silver small carrier-based aircraft.

Wow, that's awesome.

"Thank you… Captain."

I patted the shoulder of Kang Dorim, who might be operating perhaps the strongest magical girl fighting force, with trembling hands from excitement.

"Um… Eunbit Unnie… there's a problem with that."

"Hm?"

"I can't pilot that thing."

"Hm…?"

Dorim said, scratching her swaying silver hair slightly embarrassedly.

"There's no limit to creating things with the cyberbrain world, but controlling it is another matter…"

Dorim succeeded in renovating the castle into a ship through major construction work over several weeks from the end of the year.

When she actually tried to control it, the ship wobbled and couldn't reach the desired speed, so she gave up after circling the skies of Sejong City a few times, she says.

"I even asked some of the White Wing 2nd Platoon who bloomed towards piloting, but they said they couldn't do it."

"Couldn't we find someone among the magical girls in the Garden?"

"I was about to put out a recruitment notice… while magical girls who ride summoned creatures are common, there aren't many

specialized in piloting. For now, it's just a nice-looking camper van."

"Oh my, what a waste."

As I looked at the huge ship, a question suddenly came to mind.

It's one thing for countries belonging to Korea where Kang Dorim is from or the Grand Council, but if a single magical girl creates an asymmetric force that could appear in science fiction movies in just a few weeks, other countries would be terrified.

"Dorim, didn't America or other countries say anything about making this?"

"Hm? America? They didn't say anything. They seemed to know about it though, from how they talked."

"…"

Over the past month, the influence of magical girl society has grown explosively.

Traveling between Northeast Asia and Europe through warp gates and interacting, they have bestowed countless miracles and hopes.

The magical girl society, moving with its own value standards separate from existing national systems, and national governments chose cooperation instead of vigilance.

'Even so, to let it grow this much without restraint?'

Just a few months.

In just a few months, magical girl society has developed into a group equivalent to an independent country, ignoring existing social order.

Even now, many magical girls have grown as strong as strategic weapons by honing their strength through friendly matches, and magical girls with entertainment and production specialties were influencing all kinds of cultural performances and market order.

'Even without hunting demons, not a few magical girls are on the

verge of 2-star awakening just from the starlight gathered from people's dreams, like Yuki in the original work.'

A new country.

Magical girl society was forming a nation through the Garden, a physically non-existent space, beyond a simple interest group.

'Even I, who guided this, didn't expect this level of explosive power.'

Magical girls were stably growing their power and resources by entering the Garden, giving up a little of their freedom in exchange.

'Yet still, no restraints or negotiations have come in…'

America appears as a truly abandoned land in the original work.

A land devastated by demon attacks that only attacks containing starlight can affect.

A land where not a single magical girl appears.

I was curious about why such America remains silent even in this changed history.

"Eunbit Unnie."

"Yes?"

"About the Middle East and Russia."

"Yes."

"Isn't something strange?"

"…"

The small Middle Eastern countries whose key national facilities were completely taken over and cut off from contact by the magical girl called 'Doctor' during the Scavengers' rampage.

They reappeared in international society, calling for normalization of their countries.

-What on earth happened?

-Only a very minor local disturbance occurred, everything has been normalized.

No one believed it, but they remained silent while locking their borders and only discreetly sending out diplomats.

“I looked through various investigations, and they’re smuggling a lot of weapons and tanks and such.”

“…”

Russia too locked its borders after the Scavenger incident and did not announce any progress reports or countermeasures regarding magical girls.

‘Large-scale military activities were detected a few times, but their traces always disappeared somewhere in Siberia…’

I was afraid of these silences.

It was possible to defeat Alex, who attacked Korea, by quickly destroying her main airship and suppressing her through cause and effect reversal to seal her resurrection.

Now that the abilities and purposes of the remaining 3 Scavengers – [Sword], [Revenge], and Doctor – are unknown.

This silence felt like a precursor to something big happening.

‘The remaining Scavengers didn’t seem to be releasing destructive urges regardless of the target like Alex.’

At least for [Sword], I was certain that if she appeared again, it would definitely be Beijing, China.

“Dorim.”

“Yes, Eunbit Unnie.”

“Let’s convene the Grand Council.”

* * *

“Even if you give me this…”

A girl with striking blue two-tone short hair was looking at a business card in front of the Busan seaside.

[Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team]

Since her parents went missing at sea after going out fishing, Hong Nayeon had always wandered the beach waiting for her parents to return.

3 years ago.

Her parents, whose contact was cut off after a radio message saying they found some strange island, were eventually declared missing.

“That’s not true! Mom and Dad said they found something at sea! Please look for them again!”

“Nayeon! Please face reality and live!”

Nayeon’s desperate cries did not reach the adults.

And people gathered like clouds to make entertainment out of what she had experienced.

“I’m an internet broadcaster, and I introduce missing persons related to spiritual incidents or occult…”

Those trying to plunder what her parents had collected.

“What? What theft are you talking about! This is fair compensation! They’re just dead people’s things anyway, tsk.”

It was sickening.

She truly hated outsiders now to the point of nausea.

From the day Hong Nayeon received the blue Glass Star, disgusting outsiders increased even more.

Foreigners promising lots of money and status if she emigrated abroad knocked on her door all night.

There were often people who tried to take her away, almost to the point of kidnapping, in front of restaurants and convenience stores she frequented.

‘I pushed them away forcefully though.’

It was sickening.

That’s why she, who had locked her heart from all outsiders, ran away to the seaside.

…Amidst all that, the girl who said she came from Korea’s Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team was somewhat impressive.

“Hello~ Is Hong Nayeon student here?”

Silver hair.

Narrow eyes.

The girl with a suspicious appearance that anyone would see as Western spoke eerily fluent Korean while trying to persuade Nayeon.

‘It doesn’t make sense for a Korean agency to use such a suspicious foreigner…’

And the words that the narrow-eyed girl conveyed when they met for the second time in a slightly calmer state still remained in Nayeon’s mind.

-If you want to help someone but can’t think of a way, please contact the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team.

Snicker

That statement was the most appealing among all the words uttered by outsiders who had come looking for her over time.

“Hm?”

As Nayeon was sitting blankly on the beach, looking at the business card for a long time and recalling those memories, an old ship approached before her eyes.

‘No, not old but…’

A navy blue ship with brutal wounds as if it had passed through the middle of a battlefield entered the port.

“H-hey… there! Hey!!”

Hong Nayeon suddenly felt hot.

Because that was the place where her parents’ ship used to dock, which she had guarded for 3 years.

The corner space that the union people agreed to leave empty in exchange for taking her parents’ property and belongings.

Her last hope.

“Hey!! Where are you docking that ship!!”

Hong Nayeon’s unbloomed blue star shook with anger.

“That spot has an owner!!”

Hong Nayeon, who had approached the navy blue ship with big strides, was taken aback.

“…..! ……..…..!”

“Huh? What? What are you saying?”

“……..…..! ……..……..…..!”

A Western girl with blonde hair and blue eyes wearing a navy captain’s hat jumped off the ship and desperately shouted something incomprehensible in a foreign language while grasping Nayeon’s hands.

‘I can’t understand a word she’s saying!’

“……! Danger! Attack!”

As the girl wearing the navy captain’s hat desperately shouted while gradually mixing in ominous English words, Hong Nayeon looked inside the ship.

“Ahh…?!”

There, six girls with fluorescent green veins glowing on their faces were lying on the deck drooling.

‘What…?! Smuggling? Human trafficking?’

Hong Nayeon froze, her hands trembling with confusion. Seeing this, the girl wearing the navy captain’s hat took out a navy Glass Star from her bosom and said:

“Help!!”

“…!!”

Magical girl.

Hong Nayeon looked at the business card in her hand.

[Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team]

Chapter 66 : The Puppet Show on Frozen Land

“Li, do you think ‘nation’ is a concept that actually exists? If it does, how is it formed?”

The girl with fluorescent green hair wearing a black coat, who had been watching the endlessly sparkling light from the mountain range beyond the plain, suddenly started a conversation.

“Belief.”

The black-haired girl, sitting cross-legged with her eyes closed on the plain where the wind blew so cold it seemed even breath would freeze, answered.

“What is that belief?”

“The belief that it will exist there.”

“Are you saying a nation is faith?”

“No. This is a human affair.”

A dark gray robe that seemed to chaotically mix all existing colors fluttered in the winter wind, and the black-haired girl’s body visible between the wide folds of cloth shone coldly like snow.

“Then what kind of belief are you talking about?”

“The belief that safety will exist if freedom is given up.”

“Did you make the nation your enemy to break that notion and awaken freedom?”

“No. The thoughts of those left behind don’t matter.”

When the black-haired girl opened her eyes, her dark gray eyes shone. The gray pupils gathered in the center of her eyes were slightly unfocused, looking into the distance.

“It’s to tie up 40 years of grudges and favors as the last head of the Black Sword Sect.”

“Is that because of the words your parents left before they died?”

“No. The grudge left by my mother and father is merely two hundred swords.”

“What are the remaining nine thousand eight hundred swords drawn for?”

“Because it’s the teaching of those who drew the way of the sword with their mouths and passed it on.”

In an era when the martial world was forgotten in people’s memories and even the martial artists continuing the lineage were just waiting for the end.

Some people shouted that the reason we were poor was because we didn’t discard the old ways.

A hundred martial artists whose arm and leg tendons were cut in front of tens of thousands of people following madness despaired.

Because the end of the martial world they had imagined was not a sacrifice to madness for the nation’s existence.

So they crawled to gather at the old site of the Murim Alliance and drew ten thousand initial forms for revenge using tree branches held in their white teeth.

The White Sword Alliance.

The white swords wielded by a hundred martial artists were madness and delusion to forget reality.

Among the hundred martial artists who pondered initial forms to cut down the enemy called the nation while chewing mud.

One girl was born.

“This is the grudge and favor left to me, the successor of the concept called martial artist, and the concept called nation.”

“It’s very romantic but full of contradictions. What does it have to do with the people remaining now in the first place?”

“That’s right. But I must cut down the concept called nation with the swords left by 100 masters before destruction comes.”

For what did we have to disappear?

“Unreasonable and endless. That is what grudges and favors are.”

“Huh, that was an extremely romantic and abstract view of the nation. Are all Chinese people like that?”

“…”

The black-haired girl who had uncrossed her legs and stood up didn’t answer those words and slowly walked somewhere, her robe fluttering. Doctor couldn’t sympathize with those words at all, but they were always like that.

“Live as we please, die as we please.”

Let’s tie up human affairs before the destruction foretold by the transcendent being comes.

One girl had a baseless desire for destruction.

One girl had grudges and favors forgotten even by the other party.

One girl had a desire for revenge against all things dominated by one person.

And…

“Kihihihi, I just want to play with dolls.”

Playing with and toying with humans using human hands. affairs had to be accomplished by their own will.

They had to hurry and play before the gods destroyed all humans with unreasonable deception.

“Before the apostles come flocking to interfere.”

Fully bloomed 3-star magical girl of [Puppet]

Doctor

The girl who firmly believed that all humans, including herself, were puppets acting out their roles, was filled with anticipation. Because all preparations were complete before starting the game.

Surely what lay ahead would be an exciting and wonderful game.

“Kihihihi, let’s go Behemoth, Jiz.”

Groooooowl-

The huge mountain range that Doctor had been watching moved, and the entire ground shook and vibrated. Something emitting fluorescent green light shot up into the sky from atop the mountain range and disappeared far into the sky, leaving a trail of light.

Flutter flutter

Tens of millions of birds took flight simultaneously from forests spanning dozens of kilometers around where snow was fluttering, and wild beasts moved.

Naming her human creations after beasts believed to have been made by gods was Doctor’s own humor, but there was no one who would understand it.

* * *

“…”

“…”

The Grand Council fell silent.

30 minutes ago.

The Grand Council had already gathered and was discussing the movements of Russia and the Middle East. But the meeting was temporarily halted due to an emergency report coming in to the Korean self-governing body, the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team.

“Oh, isn’t Hong Nayeon the unbloomed magical girl living in Busan?”

And during the brief interruption of the meeting, Kang Dorim met Natalia, a magical girl who came from Russia through the warp gate, and heard the whole story. The situation in Russia, which had closed its borders and remained silent, was more serious than expected.

“So… this magical girl of [Puppet] persuaded high-ranking military officers and politicians by saying she could make them immortal bodies in just one day.”

“Th-they accepted that…?”

Natalia nodded with a gloomy face.

“Of course, not a few people were suspicious since she claimed to belong to a group calling themselves Scavengers.”

But the ‘puppetization’ ability she demonstrated on low-ranking soldiers and a few test subjects was enough to captivate the high-ranking officials.

Those who were old became young again.

Those who were ugly became handsome and beautiful.

They were fine even when shot, exposed to radiation, and even when chemical gas was finally deployed.

If they were exposed to magic power for just a few minutes, they shed their weak human bodies.

This was a level of temptation difficult for human reason to overcome.

‘Aren’t we also equally guilty of bloodshed?’

After that day, in just a week, most of Russia's top brass accepted the 'puppetization' bestowed by the magical girl of [Puppet]. The new miracle shown by the magical girl of [Puppet] stimulated human instinct in a state where their sense of reality was numbed by the miraculous healing abilities and magic commonly shown by magical girls.

And two months.

They converted all kinds of weapons and tanks from the Middle East into puppets and militarized them, firmly believing that the magical girl of [Puppet] who restored their youth was on their side. They thought they were under the protection of another powerful magical girl different from the magical girl of [Beginning] who was active mainly in East Asia and Europe.

"…Even so, all we could do was just follow orders."

"How… how… could such a thing…!"

"Then what on earth happened to those magical girls?"

Sumire spoke in a deliberately calm tone while looking at photos of the girls isolated inside the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Headquarters.

Eyes that had lost reason.

Girls with their limbs limp, completely relaxed.

Fluorescent green magic power was blinking in the blood vessels of their faces, which couldn't be resolved even with healing magic.

"The magical girl of [Puppet], who had captured the hearts of the top brass, proposed a method to completely control magical girls to their will."

Puppetization of magical girls.

The Russian top brass, who had been fretting over how to continue controlling the girls using transcendent powers while watching the helpless state of countries that had lost control over magical girls,

were once again tempted by those words.

“They summoned 151 magical girls active throughout Russia to the Moscow headquarters.”

Because it was impossible for everyone to gather on the same day across vast Russia, magical girls near Moscow were summoned first. Natalia and 5 others active in the east through the sea received summons from the headquarters in Vladivostok.

“I said I would return after fixing the ship I summoned with my ability, so I went in later than my team members…”

Six girls caught by fluorescent green puppets in the form of all kinds of animals.

As soon as Natalia saw that sight, she summoned a large navy blue ship in the room, half-destroying the building. Then she took care of her team members with telekinesis and fled, avoiding pursuit by the puppets.

“Those ominous-colored animals chased us wherever we went. It wasn’t easy to escape by sea either, as even the military issued a wanted order.”

After fleeing by sea for several days through the Sea of Okhotsk like that, the pursuit of the puppets was cut off as soon as they entered [Cyberbrain]’s domain.

“…That’s how we came here.”

“…”

“…”

“By… top brass, you mean the president or generals or such high-ranking people, right?”

Natalia nodded at Kang Dorim’s words.

“Doesn’t Russia… have a lot of… nukes.”

Silence.

A silence incomparably heavier than ever before fell upon the Grand Council.

"…What if they fire them?"

"Hiccup."

Li Meilin hiccupped with a pale face as soon as she heard those words.

* * *

I slightly wounded the hands of the isolated girls and then cast Heal imbued with deception magic.

The girls were breathing with their chests heaving even though their eyes had lost reason.

And as the deceptive Heal entered, the frequency of their breathing with heaving chests gradually decreased and…

Beep-

"Wh-what!! [Beginning]!! What's going on?!"

Park Saebyeok, who had been checking the girls' condition with me, widened her eyes and stood up when she heard the sound indicating cardiac arrest.

"I put them in a state of suspended animation."

"Suspended animation?!"

The magical girl of [Deception]'s telekinesis has an illusion curtain.

If the instantaneous movement ability has doppelgangers.

The healing ability could put injured people into a state of suspended animation for a while.

'They can wake up immediately if they have their own will, but.'

At least there would be no chance of these girls waking up and following Doctor's orders while we're away.

"We can't let the magical girl of [Puppet] called Doctor run wild in the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Headquarters."

"I see… all we could do was isolate them as much as possible."

"Physical space constraints are meaningless to magical girls."

It was something I had desperately realized while often sparring with Yuki in the training ground afterwards.

"So what do you plan to do now, [Beginning]?"

"…"

Russia was very close to our domain.

Nuclear weapons, the most threatening weapon of the old era.

[Puppet], threatening as a magical girl.

The two most threatening elements to humanity at present are both in Moscow.

Should we lock the door and guard, or boldly attack?

"This time… we won't just take it."

I looked up at the huge Sirius floating above the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Headquarters.

"…"

I judged that we needed to boldly strike before the magical girl of [Puppet] could be fully prepared.

And whether it should be called fate, someone who could pilot the Sirius that couldn't move asked for help.

Bloomed born 2-star magical girl of [Navigation]

Natalia

I couldn't hesitate once I confirmed that her kindness and gentleness, which had helped Yuki heading towards Russia in the original work, was still there now.

"Let's go. To Russia."

And one more thing.

Although I had only fought the magical girl of [Puppet] once, I felt she had a stubbornness to only put forth puppets and a cunning to prepare double plans.

'She put Alex at the forefront while actually leading the plan to strike Seoul.'

If this time too, rampaging in Moscow is to divert attention and there's another attack method left behind…

The magical girl of [Sword].

The magical girl of [Revenge].

Where [Revenge] is aiming is unknown.

But where [Sword] is aiming is certain.

She, who has a strong obsession with a specific country, felt like the blade that should be drawn now.

"…We might need to call Ichika."

Chapter 67 : The Puppet Show on Frozen Land

January 20th

The coldest winter ever arrived.

It was a coldness that crept from fingertips chilled by fear to minds recalling the word destruction.

[Russia has been under the control of a single supernatural ability user since last November.]

[The mental and physical control of the government's top officials, including the President, military leadership, and soldiers of each major branch, has all fallen under the dominion of supernatural ability.]

[Though resistance at the civilian level, including the military, is maintaining the defense of a few areas, it's only at the level of conventional forces.]

[…We have also lost control over asymmetric forces including intercontinental ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons.]

[The safety and security of the entire world is in a seriously threatened situation.]

[Citizens, in this grave situation, rather than being swept up in confusion and fear and acting rashly, please follow the government's guidelines with a prudent attitude.]

[Governments around the world are still working to resolve the current situation through emergency meetings.]

[…Please stay in safe places, including shelters.]

Destruction.

One word flashed through everyone's minds.

A chilling silence filled the streets rather than shopping districts, and panic buying for emergency rations occurred at neighborhood marts and convenience stores.

"I'm offering 10,000 yen!! Why won't you sell it?!"

"We're all about to die, what good is freezing cash!! I'm only accepting precious metals or watches!!"

"If you're not buying, get out of the way!! I'll… I'll bring 2 cans of gasoline, so please give me two boxes of bottled water!!"

It was anticipated chaos, but there was no option to hide the truth in the face of the massive threat of nuclear war. States of emergency were declared in all countries, and police were deployed to commercial facilities and key facilities.

People who bought emergency rations at marts as soon as they heard the news on their morning commute shut themselves in their homes, drew the curtains, and covered their heads with blankets along with their families.

Those who heard the news late panicked at frozen cash withdrawals and card payments, and tried to buy food and water through barter and haggling.

All schools declared temporary closures, and patients at hospitals with canceled surgeries could only groan while clutching their painful areas.

There were even people getting into fistfights just to get a single piece of bread, and some kneeling and begging to be sold to.

"Don't fight!! I'll distribute bread for free!!"

"Huh?! Wh-what?!"

The man who was about to take off his gold ring to buy bread widened his eyes at the cart full of bread the girl brought.

“I can make as much as I want with my ability!! There are 5 carts like this over there!!”

“Hand that over!!!”

As the terrified crowd rushed towards the cart all at once, a whistle sounded.

Beep!

Click click click

Dozens of yellow police lines forcibly divided the crowd and narrowed the paths, forcing people into single file lines. Anyone trying to cut in line even in the narrow spaces was forcibly shackled.

“Don’t cut in line!! You can receive unlimited food and water if you come to the government-designated shelters!!”

Huff

Tsugumi, the magical girl of [Order], took a deep breath with all her might.

“Please maintain order!!!”

“…”

“…”

Overwhelmed by the navy blue starlight Tsugumi emitted, the crowd quietly received their bread.

“Thank you for protecting us. Because of me…”

“No, it’s fine. We should move to the shelter once things calm down a bit.”

“Yes…”

Shizuku, the magical girl of [Baking] who tried to distribute bread out of pity but was surprised by the crowd's collective action, bowed her head to Yamashita and the security team who came to protect her while holding onto the cart.

[Deputy Chief, the 12 members of the relief corps have safely arrived at the local hospital.]

"Good work, stand by there for now."

[Understood.]

Similar scenes played out all over the world.

A world filled with chaos.

People panicking at the approaching threat and crying out about the end times.

* * *

Boom!

"Direct hit!"

The magical girls projecting attacks imbued with their starlight from atop silver gliders shot down all the enemies. Projectiles spreading out from both sides of the Sirius like angel wings hit their targets and exploded.

"Large aircraft interception complete! Left interception team, please come to the right side as is!"

[Understood!]

"Rena-san! Please deploy maximum barrage straight ahead as is!"

[Got it!]

Ratatatatat

Dozens of machine guns deployed by Rena, protected by a barrier on the Sirius' deck, spewed fire. Even as she deployed endless barrages

with gunfire loud enough to deafen, fluorescent green birds swarmed in from somewhere.

I asked the magical girl of [Communication] giving orders next to me.

“How’s the situation with the right interception team?”

“There are too many large aircraft launching small aircraft, so it’s taking time to aim and fire!”

“Please tell the right team to fire all at once straight ahead.”

“Yes! Right team! Fire all at once straight ahead as is!”

[Understood!]

Ratatatatat

Fireworks, lightning, ice, arrows, and bullets of various colors were fired, and the airspace to the right of the Sirius was filled with a brilliant barrage reminiscent of fireworks.

[Deception] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Cause and Effect Reversal

＜All bullets fired by the interception team hit the large aircraft and successfully intercepted them.＞

All shots hit the aircraft that were difficult to hit even when concentrating and aiming. The magical girls who had been shooting down aircraft rushing in from the right trembled at the sight.

“What is this?!”

“Don’t be surprised. It’s my ability.”

“…Unnie’s ability is really unbelievable.”

Beeeep

The huge birds that had been spewing out pigeons and hawks with

thin, high-pitched cries all crashed to the ground at once.

“Successful interception! Please maintain alert status for each interception team!”

Since entering Russian airspace, fluorescent green puppets had been endlessly attacking the Sirius.

“Damn it, when will those things stop appearing!”

“They’re increasing the closer we get to the huge beast!”

After breaking through the airspace for a full day, we had finally entered the airspace near Moscow, but the attacks were getting fiercer.

And the sound of the ‘beast’ gradually growing louder.

Groooooowl

With each step of the fluorescent green beast slowly appearing beyond the horizon like a huge mountain range, the ground shook and a roar sounded. It had already passed through hundreds of kilometers, sweeping away everything in front of it as it slowly advanced.

A cow of enormous size reminiscent of a mountain range just by its existence.

A scene of terrible destruction as if a storm had passed through.

Thud

Thud

Everyone fell silent at the sight of birds gathered like fluorescent green clouds in the sky above the beast and puppets on the ground following like a moving forest.

An ominous sight reminiscent of the time of destruction.

“…”

"…I heard it had already been hit by small tactical nukes."

"They say missiles from the air were hit by the enemy and couldn't hit properly."

Kang Dorim spoke in a gloomy voice.

'Supernatural abilities must be met with supernatural abilities. That's why we came.'

As soon as they grasped the situation, the UN coalition forces, hastily united with the determination to prevent nuclear war at all costs, launched attacks towards the beast advancing towards Europe even before the magical girls arrived, but to no avail.

Now the estimated time until the beast crosses Eastern Europe and traverses all of Europe is just 3 days.

Thud

Thud

"10 kilometers left to the beast! It's on a path to cross and pass through Eastern Europe! We'll be in full confrontation soon!"

Natalia, the magical girl of [Navigation] holding the helm, shouted in a solemn voice, and all the magical girl operators relayed the information.

"All entry teams, please get ready!"

I looked back at the magical girls from the friendly matches who voluntarily participated in this subjugation operation.

[Heavy Armor] and [Penetration] from Europe.

[Shooting] and [Gliding] from Korea.

[Martial Arts] and [Beast] from Japan.

[Machine Gun], [Armor], and [Rush] dispatched from the council.

And…

“Yuki! I’m counting on you for the beast!”

“Okay…! Let’s… let’s protect everyone for sure…!”

Yuki looked at me resolutely and steeled herself. Looking at her expression, I suddenly had a thought.

‘…It’s exactly the same face drawn on the cover of volume 5.’

But now there were no tears of anxiety flowing in her eyes.

“…Okay!”

After briefly making eye contact with Yuki like that, I brought out a clone.

“Descent dock preparation complete! Each entry team please standby at the descent docks!”

Yuki and I walked towards our designated descent docks.

Shing

Standing in front of the descent dock, I drew out a silver sword.

Yuki’s final realization that appeared in the original work.

Four weapons recreated by one who had glimpsed the world of born 3-star girls that couldn’t be known just by reading the text.

The sword of war.

The bow of revelation.

The scales of plague and greed.

The scythe of death.

As soon as I received them from Yuki, my unique weapons, the silk hat and cane, changed shape as if yielding their place. I was flustered when the hat I had been wearing habitually every time I put on my bloomed magical girl outfit disappeared.

‘An ability that other magical girls can’t use… only Yuki and I can use.’

Perhaps this too was the intention of whoever guided my meeting with Yuki.

Why are Yuki and I able to use all the unique weapons of born 3-star girls?

I don’t know.

‘At least for now, I just had to do what I needed to do.’

“Descend! Descend! Descend!”

As the dock opened, my silver hair shook violently in the fierce wind. Leaving behind one clone supporting the Sirius with cause and effect reversal.

I jumped straight into the skies over Moscow.

Colorless starlight enveloped me and shot out like a streak of meteor.

* * *

Familiar.

“3 minutes until descent preparation! Entry team please get ready!”

For Yuki, this atmosphere was actually familiar.

‘There wasn’t such a huge ship flying in the sky, but…’

Boom!

“Kyaaaah?!”

“Hold on tight!”

[That thing started attacking!]

The magical girls moving about inside the ship screamed as the Sirius’ hull shook to avoid the attack.

“The beast is firing high-powered attacks from its mouth to check us!!”

The attack confirmed by the UN coalition air force already dispatched for checking was fired.

“It’s not an easy opponent.”

“Hey, [Flame]! We just do as you said, right?”

[If anything goes wrong, I’ll never forgive you!]

[Heavy Armor], already enlarged with [Penetration] riding on her shoulder, and [Armor] holding the rest of the entry team in the arms of a giant robot, said.

‘This time… this time it’s not just me wanting to protect everyone…!’

She had survived by running away and faced her weakness of abandoning the past.

‘Hikari, I’m really a coward unworthy of such treatment… but.’

Yuki tried to believe in Hikari’s belief in her, praising her as the best magical girl.

“That’s right! I’m… I’m the best magical girl! I won’t let anyone die!”

The threat still remained and she was still weak. But even so, Yuki reignited her heart.

Whoosh

Yuki’s white dress burned red again. Even her black short hair burned red along with the flames.

Like a flame.

Awakened 2-star magical girl of [Flame]

Shikishima Yuki

“Haha, I heard there was someone who became 2-star on their own,

so it was you?”

Rena whistled as she saw that appearance.

“Descend! Descend! Descend!”

Click

As the dock door opened, she made eye contact with the beast opening its mouth towards the distant Sirius.

Huge eyeballs.

Murderous starlight gathering in its wide open mouth.

[Then let’s meet on top of the beast!]

Whoooosh

The huge armored and mechanized figures advanced towards the beast under the cover of the Sirius, leaving trails of starlight.

‘I’m… the best magical girl…!’

She will definitely succeed.

Chapter 68 : Deus Ex Machina

"…"

Click click

Only the sound of my footsteps echoed as I entered the Kremlin Palace, filled with a chilling silence. The entire huge city of Moscow was enveloped in an unpleasant silence.

Boom

Groooooowl

Only the faint sounds of the Sirius covering the entry team by hitting all shots through cause and effect reversal, and the beast trying to shoot it down with high-powered lasers, spread from far away.

A huge ship and magical girls.

Tens of millions of puppets and a beast of mythical proportions.

Their battle continued fiercely under the protection of cause and effect reversal.

"…"

Click

I had to stop in my tracks at the sight inside the Kremlin Palace.

In the deepest part of the Kremlin Palace, the corridor leading to the Presidential office was filled with girls dressed up in colorful dresses.

Bam!

"…Ugh?!"

Suddenly, with the sound of trumpets, middle-aged male musicians wearing old-fashioned suits and holding instruments stood at the top of the stairs and began playing a celebratory song.

Creak creak

And the 100 girls filling the corridor gestured in the air as if dancing with imaginary partners.

A dance without partners.

A ball of puppets who had lost their reason.

Creak creak

Beautiful magical girls dancing awkwardly, losing their minds while surrendering their bodies to the clumsy celebratory song slowly echoing.

"…Stop this unpleasant welcome ceremony and come out."

"Oh? I thought you liked this kind of thing. I thought our tastes were quite similar."

From the deepest part of the corridor leading to the Presidential office, a girl with fluorescent green hair wearing a black coat approached.

A thick Middle Eastern accent and tanned skin.

The magical girl of [Puppet].

"Doctor…!"

"Ah, I've never heard my alias from my own mouth? Let me introduce myself formally. The magical girl of [Pupp…"

[Deception] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Dream World

Cognitive acceleration

“…et]. I discarded my name long ago, and those who have been with me call me Doctor.”

“Tch.”

“Kihihihi, I thought you might try to paralyze and kill me right away, so I’ve already taken precautions against that.”

The puppet in the form of Doctor said with a grin.

“Was it quite obvious? Seeing as you came right here.”

“It’s all just a game to you. That’s why you were waiting in a meaningful place rather than hiding.”

“What if I’m a villain who hates all of humanity? What if I’ve already prepared to launch all the nukes?”

“If your real goal was human extinction, you would have fired the nukes first.”

“What if I’m such a terrible villain that I’ve already pressed the button in the Presidential office?”

“Don’t lie.”

I felt anger boiling up at the playful mental image I sensed from her.

A girl who treats everything as a game and just laughs at people’s confusion.

A girl who plays with others like toys without any hostility.

I drew out my silver sword. I wanted to cut down the evil that had taken root in this puppets’ ball filling the cold corridor. A sword strike that flashed like lightning.

Slash

Following the sword strike, a silver ripple arose and cut through space as it advanced.

The power originally given to the magical girl overseeing war.

A wave of blades cutting down armies.

The silver wave advanced towards the girl mocking the world, emitting an even colder light in the chilly corridor.

When the wave finally reached Doctor at the end of the corridor after brushing past everyone in the hallway, Doctor simply put her neck forward with a leisurely smile.

Drip

“Hmm?”

Doctor, who had been expecting her head to fall off, rubbed the blood flowing from the wound on her cheek with her hand.

“…Heal.”

Thud

The puppets all collapsed at once as if finishing a puppet show.

The 100 magical girls filling the corridor and the middle-aged men disguised as musicians, with eyes that had lost reason, received a single wound on their cheeks and fell into a state of suspended animation due to the deceptive heal.

Suddenly, only Doctor and I were left standing in the corridor.

“Kihihihi, this turned out disappointing. I had one more thing prepared for around this point.”

Doctor muttered with a deflated expression.

“As expected, apostles serving gods don’t know how to have fun.”

Apostle.

It felt like an important keyword.

“…I don’t serve anyone.”

“I guess you’re different from [War]? Hmm. Well, it’s not important,

so let's move on."

[War]… I see.

I finally understood who these guys were listening to.

Born 3-star magical girls already existed in some form.

"Then why are you trying to save humanity?"

"Because I decided to protect magical girls and this world."

Doctor pondered for a moment with a thoughtful face, then tilted her head. And she said while moving her hands around:

"You know… when normal humans talk about the world, they mean a very narrow range? It's rare for people to live more than 16 kilometers away from where they were born until they die."

"Stop talking nonsense and get to the point."

"Kihihihi, don't cut me off when you don't even know where the real body is! Listen for a bit! Isn't that the etiquette of puppet play?"

"…"

"What I want to say is that humans don't have such a broad perspective. Their country, their neighborhood, their home. They can't recognize the world as the world if they go just a bit beyond that."

As I listened to those words, I quietly checked the state of the barrier. The direction where Doctor's mental image was narrowing as I focused more on the conversation.

"Your 'such' perspective is a kind of madness… if I had to say, it's like a god's perspective."

I hesitated for a moment at those words.

"Usually, humans only try to save a few people related to them, they don't try to save everyone like you do?"

Doctor finally sighed deeply and spoke. A sigh of relief that her puppet play partner was not a fearsome apostle of god, but a madman not much different from herself.

“Aren’t you the one not seeing the humans of this world as humans? You’re exactly the same as me.”

“…”

“Kihihihi, I don’t understand why your alias is [Beginning]. [Deception] would make more sense, acting like a god while pretending to be human and trying to save everyone.”

Above.

The place where the mocking mental image was narrowing and gathering. A fragment of mistake that burst out for a moment. Even now, this girl was not serious at all.

Whoosh!

Shing!

Rumble

A silver cross engraved on the ceiling.

After swinging the silver sword I had drawn in an instant to cut the ceiling, I burst upwards, breaking through the collapsing ceiling.

“Whoa?! Wait a minute!!”

Leaving behind Doctor’s surprised voice, who had probably expected me to kill the puppet before rushing at the real body, I climbed onto the roof, bathed in dazzling sunlight.

Cold wind.

The chilly view of Moscow.

A fluorescent green giant body.

‘Griffin…?’

Another Doctor riding a huge griffin about 10 meters tall seemed to be hesitating for a moment as if switching control, in slow motion.

I swung the silver sword horizontally, causing a huge ripple.

Shing!

In the friendly match not long after returning from the future, the sword recreated with Yuki's insufficient 1-star starlight was just a hard flame sword, but.

My war sword imbued with starlight became a huge silver wave over 50 meters long, rushing towards the griffin and Doctor.

Slash!

Before the silver blade ripple cutting down armies could swallow the griffin, Doctor shouted:

"Jiz! Scatter your feathers!"

The huge fluorescent green griffin spread its enormous wings and flashed. Feathers spraying out from the huge wings shining with momentum to completely cover Moscow's sky.

And explosion.

Boom!

When the flash created by the collision of silver and fluorescent green subsided, a terrible scene was visible.

Due to the explosion of the griffin resisting the silver wave, the terrain over a radius of 100 meters was shattered. Those gathered in the Kremlin Palace became bloody lumps crushed by building debris. They had become corpses so cold that even the chilly winter wind felt warm in comparison.

"Jiz! Keep exploding like that!"

Roar!

The griffin roared loudly and rose, indiscriminately illuminating its feathers in the sky, and the explosions grew even larger, overlapping.

Bang!

Bang!

Rain of fire.

A burning city.

A monster calling for destruction.

The time of destruction was recreated by the hand of the girl who had created puppets earlier than the demons summoned by evil gods.

“Kihihihi, that’s right! Before the gods ruin it! Fun…”

Slap

[Deception] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Dream World

“Yes, such a puppet.”

“What, when did this happen?!”

“I had already set this up all around before coming in.”

I released the illusion barrier and returned the situation to a standoff, then swung the silver sword, changing it into a scythe.

Slash!

It was emitting a mysterious light like a crescent moon shining in the dead of night.

A desolate silver scythe imbued with moonlight.

The ominous scythe of death that cuts down everything existing in this world beyond life and death passed through the griffin and grazed Doctor.

“Ugh?!”

The sensation of having one’s soul cut.

But only a small part was cut.

‘This is not the real body either.’

I grabbed Doctor’s collar on the griffin and threw her with all my might towards the skies of Moscow.

Whoosh

Doctor, paralyzed by the shock of her soul being attacked, flew into the air without releasing control of the puppet…

Thud!

“Ugh… damn it?! What is this?”

Scales floating in the air.

Doctor landed on black and silver scales. On the scale plate where unpleasant black and silver coexisted, Doctor still couldn’t move due to the shock of her soul being hit.

‘I need to scatter the puppets quickly…!’

Click

The black scale symbolizing greed moved down.

The silver scale symbolizing emission moved up.

The meaning is absorption.

“Arghhhh!”

Doctor writhed in pain as her starlight was absorbed. Faint fluorescent green lines shone towards the tens of millions of puppets she was controlling.

Most of the lines stretched towards the battlefield where the beast

and ship were fighting, but a few lines were spread throughout Moscow.

The puppets Doctor had prepared in Moscow numbered 121.

While Doctor was writhing in pain, I calmly drew out a silver bow.

Originally, it was a weapon that should shoot arrows blessed with certain hit while listening to God's whispers, but…

[Deception] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Cause and Effect Reversal

I fired transparent arrows imbued with the starlight of deception that reverses cause and effect. The fired arrows advanced towards the sky, leaving brilliant rainbow-colored trajectories.

Whoosh

1

2

4

8

16

…

The arrows gradually split as they flew through the air, and by the time they came down from the sky again, they had become thousands of arrow rain. The silver arrows poured down, leaving rainbow-colored trajectories like a net entangling Moscow's sky.

Swoosh-swoosh-swoosh-swoosh–

Like birds unable to escape under the sky's net.

After the arrow rain passed, achieving an impossible certain hit by receiving the power to distort the world.

“What a truly unreasonable power…”

The Doctor before my eyes, who should have been a puppet, became the real body again.

Chapter 69 : Deus Ex Machina

“What a truly unreasonable power…”

Doctor, standing on the scale plate, muttered weakly. Not the recitation of someone fallen into despair, but the disappointment of a child whose prepared game was completely ruined.

“…Why don’t you reign as everyone’s god with such power? There seem to be many easier paths.”

“Because I’m human, not a god. And because I want the world where my precious people live to remain.”

“Isn’t that rather irresponsible? Despite acting more like a god than anyone.”

Groooooowl

The sound of the battle between the beast and magical girls intensifying could be heard from far away. Even with their connection to Doctor cut off, tens of millions of puppets were autonomously attacking the magical girls.

‘Dorim said she’d try her best to block the nuclear launch orders, but…’

I was also worried about the situation in China where I had sent Ichika. I needed to get as much information as possible from Doctor quickly. The sense of unease I realized only after killing Alex.

“What did you hear from that apostle?”

“Kihihihi, do you think I’ll answer obediently…”

“You’re mistaken if you think I’m doing this because I can’t force an answer out of you.”

"…Well, you've even manipulated human cognition and emotions. It's an ability similar to mine that can control humans."

Doctor spoke while looking at Moscow's sky for a moment, recalling memories. As if looking back on a time farther than a lifetime combined, though it was just a few months ago.

"…Humanity's era will soon end. Before the next era comes, plunge the world weakening with false peace into chaos in your own way."

"Weakening? What do you mean by weakening? Magical girls grow stronger through dreams!"

"Animus said that's a method only one out of the four goddesses overseeing the trial agrees with."

Animus… the magical girl of [War]. And the Scavengers first appeared in Europe.

It seemed Animus had somehow informed the Scavengers in Europe about the future situation and encouraged them to rampage before destruction came.

'And the likely messenger is probably Emily Hopkins…'

And a word I've never heard before.

'Four goddesses?'

In <Magical Girl HAZARD>, there were only three evil gods… and to think born 3-star magical girls are related to goddesses.

"This trial itself is a fake trial barely achieved through the sacrifice of that one goddess."

The girl who played with everyone spoke with a laugh truly mocking the world. The utmost respect for an opponent who had played along with her puppet show, though it ended boringly.

"…Anyway, the remaining three goddesses administering the trial only present two choices: humanity changing or perishing."

A world made to perish anyway.

All fates led to destruction.

So that they would fall so weakly with just a little temptation and ignorance…

"…"

"Suddenly, I'm curious about something."

"I'll answer just one thing before killing you."

"Why are you trying to save the world? Is this world worth saving to that extent? It seems much more fun if it perishes."

The world.

Actually, I've been having this thought often lately.

'Isn't this enough? Couldn't at least my precious people survive with this much?'

Is there a need to try to protect all of humanity in this world?

Most magical girls are already under my protection. In the worst case, I could gather as many people as possible to the areas where domains have been spread to avoid demons, and have them live on the miracles of magical girls.

It would become a precarious world dependent on magical girls, but isn't this world facing destruction anyway?

"…"

Doctor's question felt like it was poking at that.

'Isn't this… enough.'

I awakened the magical girls.

I checked Fujimoto.

I created a place that could protect everyone.

I spread domains in Korea, China, and Europe.

I was maximizing the potential of magical girls.

The remaining threats until the Trials were [Sword], [Revenge], and [War].

‘It’s also my duty to persuade [Death] to revive dead magical girls, but…’

Just by gathering and preparing what was left in my hands now, I could achieve a victory incomparable to what Yuki had accomplished.

Victory.

Victory…

‘Is it really victory?’

Hana and the Sato couple, who didn’t appear in the original work, became my reliable pillars of support.

Yuki, who returned from a time that didn’t appear in the original work, became my precious connection.

Kang Dorim, Park Saebyeok, Li Meilin, Laura…

The more I got to know people I didn’t know.

The more I learned about places I didn’t know.

My world was still endlessly expanding, and they gathered to become my new strength.

They love me, cherish me, and help me.

In the cafe I first visited in this world, I met another father.

-Were you hungry? Eat slowly.

-Thank… you…

From the first day I came to this world, I was loved by this world.

And…

"…Because I love this world."

Because it's a strange yet familiar world, not just a place to pass through before returning to my mother.

Because it's the world loved by the characters in the light novel that gave me strength when I was young.

"…I came to want to protect it."

Because I decided that after realizing the love I received from this world.

Doctor's eyes widened hearing my answer. Then she slowly raised the corners of her mouth and laughed with relief.

"Kihihihi, I thought it was pointless to praise someone else's toy box they're playing with. But it doesn't feel bad."

"Don't treat others like toys."

"Kihihihi, this is unavoidable. Just like you treat others with love because you were loved. If you're treated like a toy, you can only see others as toys."

"…"

"Ah… but it wasn't bad compared to letting it perish recklessly. It's fresh. That perspective."

Now I have to kill Doctor.

Whatever circumstances this girl has, whatever perspective she holds.

The crimes this girl committed don't disappear.

Shing

I put the silver sword to Doctor's chest.

"Kihihihi, I'll give you one gift for showing me a puppet show more fun than gods, though boring. I was going to show it as a surprise during the puppet show originally. But I saw a more interesting ending."

"…What?"

"Kihihihi, the nuclear launch button. I already pressed it a few days ago. I deleted all the stop codes and set everything to manual launch so they would definitely launch even without puppets."

"Stop it now."

I hurriedly applied cognitive manipulation on Doctor, but even after her cognition changed, Doctor only showed an apologetic expression.

"Kihihihi… so this is cognitive manipulation. But since I knew [Cyberbrain] was on your side, I prepared for months to execute it, so it really can't be undone."

"Stop it now."

"I'm sorry. Originally I was going to aim only at America and prepare to fire in advance for a surprise show once the puppet show ripened…"

"I said stop!!!"

"I'm sorry. But it's not bad to become a real god in a world without nukes, right? With magical girls' power, radiation or nuclear winter should be…"

"I said stop!!!"

Rumble

All the ground in Moscow shook.

Buildings began to tremble as if terrified.

To fire the divine punishment created by humans.

As if mocking humanity that only stopped war after putting knives to each other's throats.

Beyond the battle sounds of magical girls fighting the beast from earlier, another huge explosion sound was echoing.

And hundreds of lights rising beyond the plains.

[Unnie!!! Nukes!!! Over hundreds are all being launched!! They're all switched to manual so the stop codes aren't working!!]

[The, the US government has detected the nuclear launches and says they'll retaliate, so get away from the site as much as possible…]

[An urgent communication came in that the defense team in charge of China has all fallen into combat incapacity due to the magical girl of [Sword]'s attack!! They're requesting immediate support!!]

"1200. They were all supposed to hit major US cities, and now is exactly the set time."

Doctor spoke while giggling as if this whole situation was just funny. Another toy she discovered. It wasn't the destruction of humanity, but…

"Looks like Li arrived in China well too. She's a maniac not easy even compared to me, so it'll be tough."

My mind went blank.

No.

'No!'

I just stared blankly at Doctor.

Doctor looked at me like that and smiled with satisfaction.

"If Russia and America are all destroyed, you'll have no choice but to become the god of a new world. Congratulations."

As soon as I heard those words, I swung the silver sword. On the trajectory drawn by the clear silver blade, fluorescent green hair and blood bloomed vividly.

Shing

The silver blade rushed in and the girl's neck slid, spewing hot blood. As the hot blood fell on the frozen ground, the puppet show recreating the coming time of destruction also ended.

But the malice she had set as the finale of the play was just beginning.

Rumble

The automatically moving puppets were still fiercely attacking the magical girls. And the final malice she had scattered was now revealing itself.

[Unnie!! Dodge!! America launched nukes to retaliate!! Russia and America are done for now!!]

The hundreds of lights crossing the sky with a roar were still there.

The ending desired by the girl who saw the world as a huge puppet show.

Destruction.

And a gift for the playmate who stopped her so excellently.

A new world.

It was approaching before my eyes.

Chapter 70 : Deus Ex Machina

“Yuki, why did you try so hard to protect everyone?”

“Huh?”

The day Yuki told me about the unique weapon transformation. After finishing training, when Yuki was talking about the days she fought in the training ground.

I suddenly became curious.

The reason she wanted to save everyone like that, which wasn’t described in detail in the original work.

Her only family, her father, had already died at the starting point of the work.

Those who ruled the society she belonged to, including Fujimoto, self-destructed due to greed.

The magical girls fighting alongside her mocked Yuki’s noble vows. [Lightning], [Dream], and [Navigation], whom she considered close comrades, died during the battle.

Even if death for magical girls after [Death]’s advent meant being bound to her domain, parting was still parting.

Yuki’s fight just continued, leaving only wounds.

Yet what was the reason she didn’t lose her kindness and faith?

Because she’s the protagonist?

Friendship episodes?

The occasional human treatment she received?

Yuki looked at me and smiled brightly.

“Well, I think Hikari would already know. Maybe much more than me.”

Yuki looked back with her hands behind her back. While admiring the thousands of roses blooming magnificently outside the training ground, she tapped the floor with her red shoes. In that sound, it seemed like countless memories that couldn’t be put into words were leaking out.

“For me, who ran away unsightly from people because of burns… the days I fought to save people were miraculously wonderful days.”

“…”

“Hehe, to be honest, self-satisfaction might have been the strongest. Like, ‘I’ve only experienced bad things, but I’m still kind～’, you know?”

“…”

“Lack of food, threats from demons… yes. It was scary and hard. Everyone was sad.”

Yuki turned to look at me with her hands behind her back and smiled. That smile seemed sad, and also seemed happy. Maybe it even looked like she was crying.

“But I thought that at least I, who was the most miserable among them, should say that everyone will be happy. So every bit of happiness I accidentally found felt precious.”

“…”

“In the end, I failed everything and ran away.”

“No.”

“Huh?”

“Yuki, you didn’t run away, you stood up to start again.”

“…”

I grasped Yuki’s hand and spoke with conviction.

In this world, at least I had to affirm that.

“Yuki, you’re the best magical girl I know.”

You who showed me how to live righteously are the best magical girl.

You who don’t lose that faith are the best magical girl.

Yuki, who was silent for a moment at my words, nodded. The smile on her face became a little more comfortable.

“Yeah. Thank you, Hikari.”

* * *

[This is an emergency broadcast! It has been confirmed that Russia has forcibly launched over 1000 nuclear weapons attacks towards the United States!]

[It has been confirmed that the United States has also chosen a mutual assured destruction strategy, retaliating with all nuclear weapons towards Russia, assuming the worst-case scenario!]

[Air raid warning! Air raid warning! All citizens are requested to evacuate quickly to designated shelters, prioritizing the elderly, children, and pregnant women!]

“We’re done for… we’re all going to die!”

“No, no!! We can’t die like this!”

“Why do we have to get involved when Russia and America are fighting?!”

“It’s war… nuclear war!!”

People who had been holed up in their homes with the news on in terror poured out onto the streets, crying out in despair.

Men screamed, women wept, and young children froze stiff.

Destruction is approaching.

The news that America and Russia had fired thousands of nuclear missiles at each other spread around the world. Anyone who had gone to school even a little on Earth had been painfully educated on how terrifying nuclear weapons are and how they should never be fired. If thousands of nuclear missiles explode, only air pickled in radiation and an eternal winter will remain.

‘Destruction is approaching.’

All intellectuals, prophets, and seers warned with one voice that World War III must not happen. Even if it was a one-sided fight between superpowers, if they thought even a little about the ripple effects their final choice would bring, they had to stop it.

“Destruction is approaching.”

Everyone dies. Just that threat was the key to preventing war, so it was the worst option left empty assuming the worst case. The final option to make humans not attack and fight each other. The miserable end where everyone dies.

[Destruction is approaching!]

[Destruction is approaching!]

[Destruction is approaching!]

All internet and news was paralyzed. News announcers who had maintained composure collapsed in their seats and sobbed. Those gathered in situation rooms to discuss future events covered their mouths and trembled. Those hiding in bunkers listening to all the news on radio covered themselves with blankets, holding their breath at the destruction that had finally come.

Everyone’s gaze went up to the sky.

Some to see the nuclear missiles being launched and flying.

Some to beg God to please save them.

Some because they felt they would collapse and die if they just looked at the ground.

There, only one girl was ascending into the sky.

* * *

It was always like this.

I despaired as I desperately ascended towards the sky where thousands of lights were twinkling, wrapped in colorless starlight.

This world was too weak to overcome its fate, staggering as if it would collapse helplessly if not touched even a little.

Foolish people were blinded by the small greed before their eyes.

They hated each other while passing by the darkness that really blocked them.

“Ugh…!”

Rumble

Thousands of lights flying far away, spewing huge flames.

The worst malice humans could spit out towards each other.

Malice so helplessly thwarted by the trials given by gods.

Malice that only humans could spit out towards humans.

I chased after the numerous lights flying over Russian airspace with all my might.

“Please… please…!!”

Did Dorim carry such despair when she went up with the bomb?

I aimed the silver bow at the numerous lights and fired.

‘If I could at least shoot down the launchers and make them fall…!’

[Deception] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Cause and Effect Reversal

The world’s possibilities were silent.

Too weak to hit thousands of lights that had already passed through the clouds and reached the edge of dark space.

Still, I aimed the bow again and fired.

The world’s possibilities were silent again.

This world was too vast to protect with my hands, and my hands were too small.

Still, I aimed the bow again and fired.

‘Because the happiness I found felt so precious.’

Do I have to miss the fragments of happiness Yuki talked about again?

Like when I had to helplessly watch the girls who died due to the Scavengers’ rampage.

-Because the days I fought to save people were miraculously wonderful days.

A new world.

A result satisfied with just our small paradise, leaving behind the happiness of countless people.

The moment these missiles spew out the light of destruction.

The era familiar to me, that we knew, comes to an end.

All that remains is my surroundings.

‘Isn’t this enough? I’ve already become strong enough to protect my

surroundings and many people have gathered.'

I shook off that temptation and aimed the bow again to fire.

[Deception] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Cause and Effect Reversal

Even to my despairing gestures, the world's possibilities were silent.

Why?

At this rate, the ordinary people living now will disappear.

'Weren't magical girls supposed to protect others with dreams? Why can't I reach?'

Please answer me.

The only goddess who affirmed humans.

The goddess who believed in this unreasonable world of humans.

Please…

I aimed the bow at the numerous lights ahead, despairing at the unreasonable fate that I would miss no matter how much I ran.

Dozens of despairs.

Hundreds of temptations.

I shook off everything and simply aimed the bow for countless nameless people.

[Hang in there.]

"…What?!"

A gentle touch.

White light.

[Don’t give up.]

Overlapping hands.

Warmth.

[You weren’t wrong.]

Silver hair.

Red eyes.

[Please think about the meaning of deception for everyone.]

A girl supporting me from behind.

A girl giving me words of encouragement.

Her voice was familiar.

A colorless star.

Because it was a voice coming from there.

“The meaning of… deception.”

■■■■

“■■■■.”

Some incomprehensible realization originally now.

I was just repeating what she said.

[□□] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

□□□□

[Thank you. For thinking of this world. For coming this far.]

[So please don’t give up.]

My bow no longer had colorless light.

A dazzlingly shining white arrow was created.

I aimed and fired it.

A huge white trajectory advancing.

An enormous light gently embracing everything.

Light.

I fired that arrow and.

For the first time since awakening in this world, I consumed all my starlight.

[Unnie! All the nuclear missiles disappeared in the sky! How did you do it?!]

I wanted to answer Dorim's urgent radio call that I didn't know either.

'What about China… is Ichika okay?'

But I couldn't open my mouth because of my fading consciousness.

[Unnie? Unnie!! Answer me! Are you okay?!]

And so I fainted for the first time in this world.

Feeling someone gently embrace me as I fell.

Chapter 71 : The Fist of Freedom

Sizzle

On an early summer day at 4 PM. The heat in the mountains, already scorching hot, tormented the whole body as if it was steaming. Ichika thought the unusually flowing sweat today was due to the hot weather.

'This is the last set…!'

Warming up the lower and upper body intensely as preparation before full-fledged training was the daily routine carried out at dawn before everyone woke up in the orphanage and after elementary school classes ended in the afternoon. When peers carrying randoseru backpacks went out to play holding their parents' hands, Ichika trained in an old temple.

"Thirty… four!… Thirty-five!"

Tremble tremble

"Phew… th-thirty-six!"

In an age where people around the world could communicate via the internet and know real-time news from the opposite side of the earth. As if going against that era, an old monk living holed up in an old temple in Osaka without even electricity lay on the floor scratching his belly.

"Th-thirty… seven!"

A small kid whose head barely reached the waist of an adult male repeated the squat position the old monk had taught. If it were the

method the monk had been taught in his youth, she should have originally learned the horse stance, maintaining a squatting position for hours, but…

'…What's the big deal about the old method that only destroys the knees of later disciples.'

Even when the monk's eyebrows were as dark as thick ink, not a single proper internal energy cultivation method was preserved, so they just followed the old training methods while wearing out all the joints of the body. Now in an era where martial artists had completely disappeared, with the monk having eyebrows the color of clouds floating in the sky.

Even the distinction between internal and external energy disappeared.

The distinction between swords and sabers became meaningless.

The distinction between righteous and evil sects was laughable.

And the ending that disappeared pathetically under the madness of the times.

That was the last of the martial world the monk had experienced.

'It's futile… a futile act.'

The monk had no intention of turning the one foolish child he came to teach in his old age into an idiot who only knew the old ways, nor did he intend to teach all the outdated rules of the sect. It was possible because the monk had become somewhat enlightened while fleeing from China to Japan long ago.

An age of madness that blamed everything old for poverty and tried to eradicate all old things.

The monk was the last martial artist who had escaped from that age of madness.

"Kid, why are you doing that?"

“Th-thirty… thirty… oh I forgot! You said I need to concentrate when doing lower body!”

Since the day the girl secretly watched the monk training alone and came into the temple asking to be taught, he had never seen her remember the warm-up count correctly.

“So why are you voluntarily doing such a hard thing? It’s been 2 years already.”

“Huh? Because it’s fun.”

“What’s so fun about it? Aren’t you at an age where you should be chatting and sharing snacks with friends your age, rolling around trying to catch butterflies sitting on flower beds, and thinking about what to play tomorrow while watching the evening sunset?”

“You really talk like an old man.”

“Why you.”

Snap!

“Ouch?!”

As the monk flicked his thumb playfully, a peanut he was forgetting while watching the kid train shot precisely onto the kid’s crown. One of the throwing skills the monk once prided himself on was now only used to tease the rude kid.

“Ugh… geez, that hurts more than you’d think!”

“You rude child, why are you training in martial arts?”

“I told you it’s fun!”

Ichika wiped her face, completely soaked with sweat, with the hem of her T-shirt and laughed with a ‘heng’.

A refreshing smile like a sunflower blooming on a summer day.

“It’s fun to do one more squat than yesterday!”

As cheerfully as the sound of cicadas buried in the ground for two years crying with all their might.

“It’s fun to do one more push-up than yesterday!”

It was a clear laugh like a summer sky without a single cloud.

“It’s super fun to punch and kick more accurately than yesterday!”

“…”

“My mind feels refreshed and free like I could fly!”

What meaning was there in martial arts?

‘Just strike out where your heart leads, that’s all.’

He shuddered at the truth that came back to his foolish question.

The monk’s heart ached painfully seeing the girl’s smile.

“…Your words are right.”

* * *

“Huff…?!”

“Shh. Be quiet. [Sword] is still nearby.”

Li Na, the magical girl of [Dagger], one of the Chinese magical girls who had been jointly fighting to battle the magical girl of [Sword] until just now, whispered to Ichika with a gloomy expression. Ichika, who had just regained consciousness, gasped for breath and unconsciously stretched out her left arm to get up.

Flutter

But only the bloody sleeve cut through the air indifferently. Ichika looked at the empty sleeve with a bitter expression and muttered as if chewing and swallowing:

“…Damn it. I thought if we laid out that much, we could at least hold out even if we couldn’t win.”

They had evacuated all civilians to shelters and spent the whole night laying out all kinds of traps, weapons, and magical girls' magic. Even Ichika herself thought it would be difficult to break through all these traps. Plus the soldiers who had set up defenses through the state of emergency.

"…I have no face to show the dead children."

Out of the 12 who volunteered to fight against [Sword] among the Chinese magical girls, the desperate charge of 6 who had families in Shanghai, [Dagger]'s cover, and the sonic support magic [Harmony]'s magical girl Li Meilin had prepared to be heard throughout Beijing were all mobilized, but completely blocked.

Ten thousand black swords decorating the sky.

They shot down at the group from the sky, drawing different sword techniques as if they had their own will.

The pressure of fighting ten thousand swordsmen.

The magical girl of [Sword] broke through the sky net that the Chinese government and magical girls had laid in Beijing head-on. And as if mocking them, she slowly went around destroying all government-related facilities.

'Even with my fighting instinct, I couldn't see a way at all.'

Only Ichika's fist even reached [Sword], who was floating leisurely on a sword above Beijing's sky. Even though she narrowed and raised her fighting instinct to the maximum and pulled her into the domain of the green storm, blocking the sword thrust by the magical girl of [Sword] for 30 minutes was the limit.

"…You cannot stop me."

Finally, after a fierce battle, Ichika, whose arm was cut off, fainted from shock, and they escaped taking advantage of the gap when Li Na fired daggers by squeezing out all her starlight.

"…I requested support from the main force in Russia. They say the situation there has been somewhat sorted out."

“What about the Leader? If it’s the Leader, she could come right away.”

“The magical girl of [Beginning] blocked the nuclear weapons from Russia and America… and then lost contact, they say.”

“Damn it.”

It was bleak.

Ichika closed her eyes tightly and sighed. Seeing this, Li Na quietly surveyed the surroundings.

Rumble

Bang bang bang bang bang

Due to the helplessly collapsing buildings from earlier, Beijing’s sky was hazier and darker than usual today. The ten thousand black swords, which persistently chased the magical girls while weaving through the endlessly scattering gray smoke, gradually herded the soldiers and girls like a black net.

Slash!

Slash!

The sound of black swords flying that had killed the people and magical girls in Shanghai that day.

Grind

Li Na felt pathetic for helplessly hiding even though the one wielding those swords that had harmed her comrades and innocent people was right in front of her. If they stayed still like this, innocent people could get hurt again by the attacks the magical girl of [Sword] unleashed near the shelters.

Li Na was just anxious because she couldn’t imagine at all where the magical girl of [Sword] was trying to go.

“Hey. Li Na.”

“What?”

“What’s something in China that would really piss people off if it was destroyed?”

“…”

There were too many.

How many people live in Beijing, and it’s the capital of the huge country called China. The city’s infrastructure had already been destroyed countless times as the magical girl of [Sword] passed through, so she couldn’t even guess what was left.

“There are too many.”

“Not like strategic or important facilities, but a place where everyone would faint in shock the moment that crazy woman plants her flag.”

“…”

“From what I see, she seems more urgent about that than killing your country’s government or people. When we fought, it seemed like she could destroy politicians or national facilities while picking her nose if she wanted, but that didn’t seem to be her goal.”

Bang bang bang bang

Along with the faint gunshots heard from far away, the black swords floating in the sky flew like arrows towards the source of the sound.

Slash

“Look at that. She’s only responding minimally to those trying to stop her while constantly looking for something. Most guys who act like that in battle aren’t looking for a clear goal, but for how to screw someone over.”

As soon as she heard those words, a certain place flashed through Li Na’s mind.

“The Forbidden City.”

The Imperial Palace.

“Let’s confront her there.”

“Can we do it just by ourselves?”

[Sword] had already easily crushed numerous traps, armies, and even the desperate resistance of magical girls.

And Ichika, the magical girl of [Freedom], had lost one arm.

“No matter how you look at it, don’t we have no chance of winning?”

“Our goal from the start wasn’t to defeat her. It’s to buy as much time as possible.”

“…”

“Don’t we need to do something crazy to get a crazy woman’s attention?”

“…Follow me. I’ll guide you.”

Chapter 72 : The Fist of Freedom

[Avenge us!]

[Why did we have to suffer like this!]

[Don't forget our grudge!]

[You are our sword.]

[■■■, you are our revenge and resentment that we wield.]

[Your blood, your bones, your flesh. Everything is made of our grudge.]

[Let them know.]

[No matter what price you pay!]

[Our grudges and favors…!]

'Our grudge…'

Lee, the magical girl of [Sword], came to Beijing for the first time in her life. The city her masters had told her about while mumbling with bony teeth pulled out from chewing tree branches in a dark cave.

"The place we must take revenge on."

Lee's sense of self was shattered by the waves of grudge and obsession that 100 masters whispered every day.

As soon as she was born, when her parents, who occasionally called her by name, no longer called her by name, she forgot everything

except her surname Li. From the day even her parents were buried in the desire for revenge, her name was ‘Successor’.

“Revenge.”

The huge city spread out before her was majestic and enormous, as if embodying the spirit of China advancing to meet a new era. Those who lived here lived expecting China’s tomorrow, which they believed without doubt would shine brilliantly.

“I’ll let you know.”

The malice of the Black Sword Sect that slowly grew in a cave 40 years ago where your hope doesn’t reach.

What you deliberately let flow to the other side of history.

What you let flow to the other side of oblivion.

The world of black swords created by martial artists who continued miserable lives in caves with their limbs’ tendons cut.

All that remained for the girl was martial arts.

“Be born as you please. Forget as you please. Die as you please.”

Die caught up in unreasonable grudges and favors.

The malice of the Black Sword Sect will cover the concept of nation.

That was the only meaning of existence left for Lee.

“…”

[Sword] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Ten Thousand Sword World

‘That place.’

‘That place!’

‘The place where we were unjustly wronged!’

‘The place where our lives were trampled!’

‘Destroy that place!’

The screams of ten thousand black swords digging into Lee’s ears were directed at the orange castle built in the center of Beijing. In front of that huge castle, 100 martial artists had their limbs’ tendons cut while being mocked in front of tens of thousands of people.

‘They mocked us, calling us old-fashioned!’

‘They threw us away, calling us useless vermin!’

The Forbidden City.

Lee slowly flew towards it, standing on a black sword.

The groups that had been interfering with her couldn’t handle the Ten Thousand Sword World and hid somewhere in this huge city. The soldiers who tried to stop her like in Shanghai retreated, unable to overcome their fear.

Thud

Lee took one step at a time, taking in the huge appearance of the Forbidden City she had suddenly arrived at.

The black swords that had been floating around Beijing hunting down interferers gathered one by one, following behind the successor.

Ten thousand swords cried out for the forgotten world of martial artists behind the successor, just like in those glorious times.

‘Why did we have to become sacrificial lambs!’

‘Could we not decide our own end!’

‘We deny the history built upon our blood!’

“…”

Since awakening the Ten Thousand Sword World, the voices of

lamentation, despair, and resentment that 100 masters, or parents, had cried out endlessly echoed in her mind. It was the single milestone and sword path that her life was heading towards.

Stop

"…"

"Hey, you can't just cut off someone's arm and leave so heartlessly."

A girl hiding her severed arm with a bright green robe blocked Lee's path.

"I challenge you to a duel! You bastard. Let's fight again!"

Ichika said confidently, wiggling her right hand.

'Is it recklessness?'

Lee couldn't understand her confident expression. Someone of her level should know that she was no match for herself. Everything she said felt like a waste of time.

"You cannot stop me."

"We'll only know that after we try."

Under the hazy sky filled with smoke from collapsed buildings, a girl in an ink-colored robe and a girl in a green robe faced off. Following behind the ink-colored robe were ten thousand black swords screaming, and spread out behind the green robe was the sky faintly visible through the rising smoke.

Qishi Six Harmonies Fist.

The basic fist technique corresponding to heaven, earth, and four directions that Ichika first learned from the old monk in the dilapidated temple in Osaka.

Qishi Black Dog Fang.

The beginning of revenge taught by a toothless mother in some dark

cave.

Ichika's stance was stable, with her lower body sinking heavily as if carrying a thousand pounds, while Lee's stance was calm but surrounded by a threatening killing intent like a dog's fangs ready to bite at any moment. The two girls fell silent, preparing the initial forms placed at the starting point of their lives, guessing that this fight would be a battle to the death.

"…"

"…"

The standoff between the two girls who had maintained silence for a moment was broken with a roar.

The first to strike wins.

Ichika's green fist rushed in, becoming a pillar of clear light flying over the white stone floor of the Forbidden City. The two legs visible under the sailor uniform skirt swiftly closed the distance with minimal steps through strong movements.

Boom! Bang! Bang! Boom!

With each of Ichika's steps, the stone path leading to the Forbidden City shattered, creating thick stone dust. As if an archer made of stone dust was shooting green arrows.

Lee slightly raised her black sword in the same calm stance standing on two legs and thrust it towards the empty space Ichika was approaching, and dark gray starlight gathered and suddenly rose up over the black sword.

As the green fist and black sword collided, there was a roar that shook heaven and earth. The two girls, close enough to see each other's pupils, unleashed their most threatening attacks that could take each other's lives.

Red Mist Divine Palm.

A palm technique containing the subtle principles of subduing

demons used by Emei Sect nuns to subdue enemies wielding evil powers.

Ichika, with her only remaining right hand straightened, emitted a faint and warm green energy like a fading red sunset, driving away the dark gray starlight. The evil starlight that had grown by feeding on others' blood wavered under the palm technique resembling a sunset containing the enlightenment of nuns from long ago.

Faint yet intense like a sunset on the horizon.

Ichika's strike, extending through the wavering energy due to the demon-subduing palm technique, was faint yet warm and resolute.

Black Ghost Kill.

Lee's black sword scattered the starlight dimmed by the Red Mist Divine Palm into the air and danced erratically. The dark gray starlight fluttered chaotically, completely dispersing Ichika's green energy and dancing erratically.

Like a shaman's dance to drive away ghosts.

Like the mindless dance of a woman possessed by ghosts.

What was evil and what was good?

In a world full of chaos, it was enough to just dance once.

The dance of a sword ghost who had let go of even its own soul to fight the concept of nation.

The viscous killing intent contained in the sword dance dispersed hazily, pushing back the faintly flowing demon-subduing energy. The black sword that had been dancing as if mad naturally changed course and advanced towards Ichika's neck.

"Ha!"

The soul of a mad swordsman rushing towards Ichika, who had pulled her body back hard with a shout of effort to avoid the killing strike.

Black Bear Eyes.

Have you ever seen the eyes of a mother bear who lost her cub?

That viscous killing intent.

Those resentful eyes.

The most intense killing intent realized by a heartless person who deliberately killed bear cubs and called out the mother bear to awaken a resentment stronger than anyone else's. In a single streak of viscous killing intent contained in Lee's sword was the soul poured out by 100 martial artists who had their lives taken away.

"Li Na!! Now!!"

At Ichika's shout, the magical girl of [Dagger] who had been hiding appeared from the darkness.

"Take this!!"

Lee's posture, spraying the most viscous killing intent ever, was paradoxically in the most vulnerable stance, and threatening daggers completely occupying all directions of that opening poured down.

Poison.

Lee sensed the faint scent of poison from the daggers and withdrew the killing intent she had been extending towards Ichika, raising her hand to call out the black swords. Ten thousand black swords deployed in the direction Li Na was attacking.

Whoosh!

"…What?"

Lee looked up, feeling a sudden roaring in her head.

Mortars pouring down.

"Your head's empty!!"

Li Na's daggers relentlessly striking the ten thousand swords.

Ichika's Jade-Breaking Fist Technique striking towards the suddenly empty flank.

Mortars falling on Lee's head, which had been focused on the duel.

'Were they trying to surround me?'

Realizing the scheme that had aimed for the moment she was concentrating on one person in a fixed location for the first time, Lee quietly let go of the black sword.

Boom!

Dozens of mortars exploded, creating a thick dust cloud, and with a ringing in the ears that felt like they would burst, a terrible sight was revealed.

The stone path of the Forbidden City was completely covered in black gunpowder smoke, and all the stone path fragments shattered, creating a huge crater.

"…"

What appeared as the smoke cleared was Li Na, who had flown far away in tatters and collapsed unable to move.

Ichika, covered in blood with her knees completely bent, her special combat uniform for fighting torn to shreds even though it was wrapped for protection.

And the magical girl of [Sword], who had quietly raised her hand blade towards the sky.

Mind Sword.

For [Sword], who could freely deploy sword paths wherever her mind went, surprise attacks coming from all directions didn't work.

"Damn it."

Ichika felt truly bleak as their final scheme was blocked.

Chapter 73 : The Fist of Freedom

She had lived freely like a flower blooming on a mountain path.

When she was weak, even if blocked by those who stood in her way, she lived with her heart burning while gazing far away.

After growing stronger, she used her strength to make only right things happen, distinguishing between right and wrong as much as her simple mind could.

17 years.

A life that's short if called short, and like eternity if called long.

Today, for the first time, that life was about to fade away under a life-or-death battle fought to kill an opponent.

There were not few people who truly wanted to kill Ichika.

Street thugs who stole wallets from innocent people would often pull out pocket knives when she stopped them.

"Who are you? Sailor uniform? Some high school thug?"

Mischievous troublemakers who had heard rumors of the green chivalrous hero would playfully ask for her help and then throw bricks at her head.

"You won't die anyway since you're a magical girl! Boring!"

…Though she wasn't hurt by the bricks and beat them up as soon as they were caught.

And Kaede.

“I’ll defeat you!”

She had often challenged Ichika to duels even after blooming and losing in the friendly match. But the first fight had killing intent under Fujimoto’s name.

The Fujimoto underlings she met in the seaside warehouse were so insignificant she honestly barely remembered them.

‘Well, the Leader was clumsy then so I had quite a hard time.’

Now that she had realized her own strength, she should be fine since she had become strong enough to be no match for even 10 Ichikas.

Leader.

Shirogane Hikari.

The benefactor who helped Ichika, who had lived freely like a flower in the mountains, to fly like the wind without being plucked by anyone.

‘Leader… I’m sorry. I lost.’

Heng.

If it was her request, she who had saved herself from Fujimoto’s clutches, she could gladly fight with her life. She only regretted not being able to properly fulfill that request.

Thud

Thud

The magical girl of [Sword] approached slowly with an expressionless face.

The strange resentment emanating from each of those footsteps was chilling.

As if 100 ghosts were attached to her feet…

“Hey, why do you train in martial arts?”

The question the old monk had once asked her younger self.

“To appease the souls of martial artists who were wronged here 40 years ago.”

Lee answered in one breath as if stating something very obvious.

Ichika laughed bitterly at the sight.

“…Were the 100 magical girls you killed to light your starlight related to that incident?”

Lee answered naturally.

“Revenge knows no emotion. I committed it because it was necessary for revenge.”

“…Were the young children waiting in the hospital and the parents waiting for their children related to that incident?”

Lee answered naturally.

“If they live subordinate to the concept of nation that my masters wanted to take revenge on, they are my enemies.”

“…”

A slave.

To Ichika’s eyes, this girl looked like a slave who had lost the ability to think and ponder for herself, trapped by concepts and karma. A slave who mechanically gave predetermined answers without any thought.

Did she not think even once whether it was right to kill those girls?

Did she not ponder even once whether the patients she killed were truly targets for revenge?

“You… your revenge is not right. There’s nothing you’ve decided for yourself.”

“Is that your sense of justice?”

“No, it’s just common sense.”

Ichika’s blood-covered face hardened coldly as she shot back at Lee. Green energy flared up in response to her anger.

“You have no conviction. You just recite what someone else told you and avoid responsibility.”

“…”

“If you’re!! A martial artist!! You should have at least thought and acted for yourself when trying to kill someone!!”

“…”

“You slave possessed by ghosts!! Are you just ruminating on plausible words someone whispered to you?!”

Freedom begins by denying bondage.

Ichika denied the ten thousand karmas the girl before her was shouldering.

‘You are not right.’

Ichika defined the revenge Lee was advocating as unreasonable bondage.

A body in tatters.

A missing left arm.

None of that mattered anymore.

Sorry Leader.

Sorry Kyoko.

Sorry little Sato.

Sorry Shikishima.

Sorry everyone.

‘I guess I’m really an idiot.’

If she begged for her life here, she might be able to avoid that girl’s revenge.

If she took even one step back here, it felt like her 17 years of life would all be denied.

Ichika stood up.

What was martial arts?

‘Why are you training in martial arts?’

What do you want to put in this fist?

“Freedom…!”

Ichika shouted, squeezing out a voice that sounded like she was chewing and swallowing from her throat where blood was boiling.

“I put my freedom in this fist!!”

Just towards where her heart leads.

Towards what she believes is right.

A strike from a girl in tatters.

A strike so slow and insignificant that even the approaching magical girl of [Sword] quietly raised her sword to respond.

But within the green line drawn by the fist was contained the girl’s entire life.

Born in the womb of a mother whose face she didn’t know, abandoned at the door of an orphanage, watching an old monk training in a dilapidated temple, enjoying the joy of growth while training every day, grieving and bowing to her master who died alone in the cold winter, despairing after being kidnapped when discovered to have become a magical girl, saved by a mysterious girl and truly living freely.

The life of Yamanaka Ichika was as free as a flower blooming in the mountains.

The green line drawn by the girl's fist was the stem and bud just before a flower blooms.

What hung at the end of the stem.

What the bud was supporting.

Was a world where a girl was born, lived, helped countless people, and practiced the teachings of ancient martial artists.

A free world.

The girl's life was truly a free life.

Boom

When Lee started to be wary of the tremendous power that began to be contained in the slow and unimpressive fist.

Ichika's free world blossomed.

The answer to a lifetime realized by seeing the appearance of a mortal enemy standing at a completely opposite point.

Ichika had always been putting freedom in her fist.

For Ichika, martial arts was embracing freedom.

When Lee, pushed back by the spreading green storm, raised ten thousand swords.

Behind Ichika stood a green giant with a thousand arms.

Fully bloomed 3-star magical girl of [Freedom]

Ichika

The green storm enveloped Ichika and the hearts of countless people who had melted into her life freely melted in.

Breaking free from the bondage of all things and simply stubbornly doing what was believed to be right.

The concept called martial arts truly became one with her world and blossomed.

Not the sailor uniform symbolizing rebellion and struggle, but the silver light armor meaning enlightenment fluttered, and her eyes and hair shining green burned brilliantly.

“…”

“…”

The two girls realized that the words they had uttered to each other denied each other’s lives.

They aimed ten thousand black swords and a thousand green arms at each other.

Ichika neatly put together her left and right arms that had somehow reformed from gathered green energy and put her palms together. And when she stretched out her fists again. She wished that the world of that girl full of improper bondage would end without hurting others.

Lee gathered dark gray energy and combined all the black swords into one. What she was imitating was the form of a ferocious dragon. She deployed the final technique created by 100 martial artists who ultimately wanted to kill all the people in the world while resenting them.

Arhat God Fist

Black Dragon Heaven-Breaking Sword

As the energies created by the two worlds collided, an explosion bigger than dozens of bombs occurred.

A flash that seemed to blind both eyes and a roar that seemed to tear off both ears.

A vibration that seemed to completely mix up the world occurred, and green and dark gray energies tangled chaotically, drawing a threatening taiji symbol.

Boooom

The already damaged stone floor of the Forbidden City was completely overturned and disappeared due to the collision of the two energies.

A thick dust cloud.

Terrible debris.

Even after the dust cloud passed by, brushed away by a cold winter wind blowing from somewhere, the two girls were still standing looking at each other.

"…"

"…Cough."

Ichika, her green hair now loose and flowing long, had her fist against Lee's chest.

The scar from her fist, which extended 100 meters behind Lee, started from her heart.

Hundred Step God Fist

"…Didn't you have any regrets while taking revenge?"

Ichika asked Lee.

"Regret."

Lee's gaze was directed at the clear sky visible through the gray smoke that had been completely pushed away by the collision of the two girls.

"I don't know what that is. My masters didn't tell me."

Thud

Lee spat blood from her mouth and fell backwards.

The sky shining through her slowly closing eyes was piercingly beautiful.

“…”

The ten thousand black swords gradually fell silent with her death.

For the first time since Lee was born, complete silence came.

Peace.

The world of black swords, born for revenge and taught only revenge for a lifetime, ended.

Ichika quietly put her palms together in the way her master had taught her just before Lee died.

Li Na, who had woken up again at the sound of the fight, quietly approached Lee’s corpse and checked her pulse.

“…”

“…”

One girl cried thinking of her dead comrades and people.

One girl silently put her palms together.

The revenge of a girl who had massacred countless people and plunged Beijing into chaos was simply blocked by a girl who thought it was not right.

All that was left for those remaining was a heavy silence.

Chapter 74 : Aftermath

Groooooowl!

The beast's enormous body, with a height similar to a several dozen-story building and a length exceeding several hundred meters, was overwhelming even in the moment of its collapse.

A massive rumble as if heaven and earth were being overturned, and the violence of its mass.

The beast, which had been an incarnation of destruction just by its existence, finally fell silent.

[The beast has completely fallen silent!]

[Woohooo! I thought we were really going to die!]

The entry team plunges into the beast's mouth, which emits the most lethal attacks. And they had to dig more than 300 meters deep into the interior while the high-powered energy attack was being prepared.

"Th-the place where it can make the strongest attack is likely directly connected to the most vital core organs!"

An extremely dangerous idea where everyone who entered could be vaporized with just a few seconds' difference. Everyone inside the Sirius, which was entering Russia, turned pale. But the martial arts magical girls who had witnessed the amazing battlefield analysis ability shown by the magical girl of [Flame] in the friendly match supported this strategy.

"It's not like we have any other options anyway. Seems like the most plausible plan."

“We just need to watch the timing carefully. Dodge well, blow it up, and get out. Simple, right?”

[Penetration] and [Shooting] affirmed [Flame]’s plan in calm voices.

“This is truly a plan burning with passion!”

The voice of [Martial Arts] shouting excitedly at the extremely dangerous plan.

The entry team thus formed, consisting of martial arts magical girls from the friendly match. They calculated the timing of the beast’s high-powered attack and boldly plunged into its mouth.

“What should we do about the puppets chasing us from behind?”

“They’re the ones that slipped through the Sirius’ firepower…”

“Taste my machine gun filled with love!”

“My leopards! Go and tear them apart!”

The entry team advanced while repelling hundreds of puppets that had broken through the Sirius’ fire net and chased them into the beast’s mouth.

[Waaah?! They say nuclear weapons have been launched from Moscow, what should we do?!]

“If we turn back now, the Sirius will be in danger! We need to hurry to the power source and destroy it!”

“Aaaargh! Run! Hurry and run to attack!!”

At [Armor]’s panicked voice in the urgent radio transmission, [Flame] hastily reminded them of their original purpose.

Without the Sirius’ cover, they couldn’t have broken through tens of millions of puppets.

“This is the power source!”

They arrived at the power source with all their might and were

overwhelmed by its enormous size.

The beast's power source shining fluorescent green like the sun.

"There! Everyone, fire your maximum firepower!"

[My armor!]

"Nanami! Carry me on your back and take me right in front of the power source!"

"Whoa, o-okay! Rena-chan!"

With a sound that seemed to burst their eardrums, attacks spewing from everyone's unique weapons and equipment gradually eroded the fluorescent green power source. The power source sparking from the multi-colored attacks. Small puppets endlessly pouring in from outside.

Crunch

The precariously remaining time until the next high-powered attack.

With a cracking sound, the power source cracked.

"Haaah!!"

A girl in a dress as red as if burning thrust her flame sword into it.

Like inserting a key into a giant lock, the sword thrust with all her might inflicted a huge wound on the power source along with an enormous flame.

Whoosh!!

The energy that had been gathering for the high-powered energy discharge began leaking through the gap created by the sword.

"The energy is backflowing!! Get out of the beast's mouth!!"

A breathtaking moment.

An urgent radio transmission saying nuclear launches had begun.

The roar of tens of millions of puppets coming from hundreds of meters ahead outside the beast's mouth.

Every second felt like it was stretching into eternity.

When they finally leaped out of the beast's mouth.

Boom!!

With a massive shockwave, the beast staggered and collapsed, falling silent.

Tens of millions of puppets were being scattered, pushed back by the Sirius' fire net.

"We did it…"

Yuki smiled with joy.

She had been able to brilliantly fulfill her friend's request.

She had stopped the beast that was about to cause massive slaughter just before Eastern Europe.

The beast that collapsed with a roar on a vast plain with no residential areas in sight.

'Hikari…! I succeeded…! I really didn't let anyone die!'

[Notification from the magical girl of Communication! All nuclear attacks have been stopped!]

[Notification from the Mingyue-affiliated magical girl in charge of China's defense! Successfully repelled the magical girl of Sword!]

Good news continued to come through the radio attached to Yuki's ear as she slowly descended, wrapped in flames.

Hope.

For the first time, hope that she had protected, rather than despair at what was lost, welled up in Yuki's heart after the battle ended.

None of the magical girls who participated in the operation she led had died.

They had prevented a commotion that could have plunged the world into massive chaos before the Trial came.

“Hikari! We succeeded here too! Are you okay?”

Yuki transmitted a personal radio message to Hikari through the receiver attached to her ear with trembling hands.

More than anything, she wanted to hear her voice.

“…”

“Hikari?”

“…”

[Notification from the magical girl of Cyberbrain… The magical girl of Beginning neutralized the nuclear attack and is currently missing with communication cut off…]

“…Eh?”

What?

Hikari?

That’s impossible.

“Wh-what do you mean…”

No.

[According to the command structure, I’ll command the return operation… We’ll definitely search for the magical girl of Beginning… Let’s return for now.]

No.

“Hikari…!”

That can't be.

* * *

January 24, 2012

[UN Security Council unanimously decides to expel Russia.]

[The ugly truth hidden behind the expulsion and imprisonment of foreign businesspeople in Russia since last year.]

[Incompetent puppet government, crisis of destruction brought on by greed.]

[The 'Eagle' trying to drag the whole world into its own grave.]

[Fierce criticism of the US President and ruling party, and aftermath of nuclear war. Some predict possibility of impeachment motion.]

[160 countries out of UN member states issue strong diplomatic protests against US and Russia.]

[2012 human extinction rumors, were they prophecies about the 'Moscow Incident'?]

[Thousands of nuclear weapons evaporate. US government conspiracy?]

[Silent US Department of Defense, disappeared nuclear weapons.]

[Separatist movements claiming independence from superpowers on the rise.]

The crisis of destruction passed by the world all too suddenly and ridiculously.

Some evaluated that even if thousands of nuclear weapons had detonated simultaneously, climate change and radiation damage would have been a level of disaster that modern society could overcome, except for the parties directly involved, Russia and America.

[We shouldn't equate the affairs of America and Russia with the 'whole world'!]

However, contrary to such views, the aftermath left by the Moscow Incident struck the whole world all too clearly.

The rapid movements of some hardline forces that had been stirring to break away from the order led by superpowers immediately after the nuclear launch. Logistics movement and production cut off by the war crisis. Even with just the aftermath of an event that ended without any damage, the international community took a big hit.

People around the world who were returning to daily life after New Year's greetings welcomed the fourth week of January with a shock as if hit by a hammer.

All stock markets and economic indicators plummeted at once. A huge aftershock, as if an iron rod had been thrown into the wheel of an athlete sprinting at full speed.

Just one day.

As news spread that nuclear weapons were flying through the sky, thousands of suicides occurred around the world from people unable to overcome their fear.

Even that ended to this extent only because people were too shocked to react to the crisis of destruction that came without any warning signs.

"…"

"…"

What dominated people after the fear passed was helplessness.

The great sadness that comes after the fear that daily life could disappear in a single day.

Broadcasting stations around the world temporarily suspended all sports, entertainment, and amusement programs except for news and some live broadcasts.

A point where all public interest converged on one thing.

As much as everyone had despaired in the face of the threat of destruction, they began to focus on the one person who had saved them from that destruction.

Even those not belonging to magical girl society, people around the world were curious about the whereabouts of the one person echoing in the news all day long.

[Where is the magical girl of Beginning?]

[The magical girl of Beginning who disappeared after the miracle of Moscow.]

[What was the identity of the white light that cut across half the earth?]

[Is this a power humans should possess?]

[Angels and demons with faces so lovely and familiar.]

The girl who awakened magical girls, resolved numerous incidents, and finally even prevented nuclear war.

And the three fully bloomed 3-star girls who had brought Korea, Russia, and China to the brink of national destruction.

Numerous magical girls who directly stepped forward to save countless people despite having the same supernatural abilities.

The treatment of magical girls now rose to a level where awe and fear coexisted, beyond just children with strange skills, even in places with state-recognized organizations.

Magical girls who shone brighter than anyone in ordinary life and ran into the darkness.

If they wanted to harm with malice, they could wield power more evil and enormous than anyone, but they chose justice nonetheless.

[It is a great sin to equate evil supernatural ability users with magical

girls who devoted their whole bodies to save us.]

[We will remember the 6 magical girls who sacrificed their lives for the countless citizens of Beijing and the citizens who died in Shanghai.]

The safe return of all magical girls who voluntarily participated in the Moscow operation.

Parents who belatedly learned of their daughters' participation in the operation nearly collapsed, and families who knew sighed in relief.

Most people respected the girls who flew on a huge silver ship, simply believing it was right, without any political gain.

[What is the Grand Council's next move?]

The whole world continued to issue high-intensity criticism statements towards the US and Russia, but waited only for the words of the Grand Council, the center of magical girl society.

Chapter 75 : Aftermath

“…Thank you for saving me.”

“It’s okay. I was startled when I suddenly felt an unfamiliar person’s unconsciousness above the village.”

Huhu.

In front of my eyes, a girl with purple hair wrapped in a purple aura was floating around, smiling beside the bed I was lying on.

…And behind her, on an old living room sofa, a girl with the same appearance was sleeping, holding a purple Glass Star.

Bloomed born 2-star magical girl of [Dream]

Cho Yeonseo

The magical girl of [Dream] in the original work comforted people who had lost family members or were in despair with her ability to handle the dream world.

She was a guardian who protected the area around the nursing home in Gyeonggi-do where she lived by putting demons and raiders to sleep with powerful sleep magic.

…That would have been the case if she had bloomed after this summer.

“Huhu, after blooming, I was able to live a normal life, so I came to Russia, my mother’s homeland, following my maternal grandfather.”

She had lost both parents in a gas explosion accident and suffered from severe acquired narcolepsy due to grief. Even after becoming a magical girl, her narcolepsy, which was greatly affected by mental issues, persisted.

“If there was no knocking sound for more than 3 minutes in the hospital bathroom or shower room, the nurse or my grandfather would come and save me…”

Only after blooming her ability to handle sleep and dreams was she able to live a proper daily life.

And seeing this, her maternal grandfather decided to return to his homeland, Russia, to live together.

“…Would you consider coming with me? I need your help.”

Cho Yeonseo’s purple doppelganger quietly shook her head while smiling gently.

“The people here need me.”

“…”

As she said, apart from the old bed where I had been lying unconscious for 3 days, there were numerous beds and sleeping bags in the living room.

Purple energy flickered on the eyelids of the people lying there, each sleeping while having happy dreams. Some were shedding tears of longing.

Mental images of joy and longing.

They were truly being saved by dreams.

A small village located near Yekaterinburg, an industrial city on the eastern slopes of the Ural Mountains.

Befitting a city famous for commerce and industry, there were many villages around Yekaterinburg where numerous workers lived together.

Among them, a village where the owner of dreams lived, spreading secretly by word of mouth.

A house where people gathered after hearing rumors of a girl who

shows dreams that soothe desperate reality.

"…"

Seeing people forgetting their despair through dreams in real life, just like in the original work, I felt mixed emotions.

Even if I wanted to bring up reality, it felt like I would hurt people clinging to precarious happiness that seemed about to collapse at any moment.

Thud thud

With footsteps, a large old man with a kind face walked into the living room.

"Asya, when will that girl wake u… Oh. You're awake."

Anastasia was the name Cho Yeonseo used in Russia, and Asya was a nickname.

Creak

With a kind smile, the large old man sat down on the sofa next to where I and Cho Yeonseo's doppelganger were talking. A good-natured smile spread across the old man's face, which had traces of the distinctive Asian features of the Ural ethnic minorities.

"Strange things kept happening, and now even a beautiful girl like this falls from the sky, hoho. It's a strange era."

"Grandfather, how is it outside?"

"Always the same, the military bastards turn a blind eye appropriately, strange-colored beasts can't take a single step into the village thanks to your ability, and outside there's a commotion saying 'Nuclear war has broken out!'"

I could vaguely guess why Cho Yeonseo hadn't been summoned as a state-recognized magical girl.

'No wonder I saw people in military uniforms among those sleeping

in the living room…'

They must have been allowed to live quietly in the village in exchange for showing kind dreams to them.

And the nuclear war mentioned by the old man.

Thousands of nuclear weapons that should have struck Russia and America originally disappeared along with white arrows.

'How on earth did I notice and eliminate missiles even on the opposite side of the earth?'

That day.

That moment.

For a very brief moment, when I drew the white arrow, I could vaguely know everything happening on this planet.

Like a god.

"…"

And I fired the arrow, wishing only for nuclear war not to happen.

"…"

But I couldn't remember the spell and ability that the girl with the same face as me had told me then.

The identity of that girl was probably…

"So do you have somewhere to go now? If you don't have a suitable place, you're welcome to stay here."

"Thank you. But I have somewhere I need to go."

"I see. Take care."

I got up completely from the bed and walked towards the front door. Then I heard Cho Yeonseo's voice from behind.

“I don’t know what’s going on, but I’m sorry I can’t go with you.”

“…It’s okay. If you already have people to protect, it can’t be helped.”

In the original work, the nursing home in Gyeonggi-do that she was protecting collapsed due to demons, and she joined Yuki’s journey.

A comrade called by the nickname Asya.

A comrade who, though resigned to the desperate reality, at least didn’t mock Yuki’s words.

I finally found out the location of the magical girl of [Dream].

‘Would Yuki be happy to know? But even Natalia, the magical girl of [Navigation] who was also an original work comrade, pretended not to know on purpose…’

Yuki was hesitant about seeing people related to the original work that had been reversed due to regression.

‘Someday, if Yuki’s heart becomes a little more at ease…’

I slowly left the house where the girl who protects people through the dream world and her grandfather lived.

Hong Nayeon, the magical girl of [Sea], had opened her heart a little but was still an unbloomed magical girl, and Cho Yeonseo, the magical girl of [Dream], had bloomed but had already found a place to protect.

When I rummaged through my hoodie pocket, I felt Doctor’s fluorescent green Glass Star and my Glass Star.

Cho Yeonseo had just put me to sleep with her doppelganger, and it didn’t seem like she had rummaged through anything in particular.

‘Actually, I’ve passed the stage where it would be troublesome if I was found out to be [Beginning] now…’

I took out the Glass Star that had regained some light, transformed,

and returned to the domain.

Whoosh

The Garden I returned to with dazzling light was originally quiet, but it seemed even quieter today.

Click click

Even though I transformed, I didn't feel energetic, perhaps due to the aftermath of using a great power that even I didn't fully understand. My shoulders drooped, and every joint in my body creaked with each step. I tried to keep my back straight and walk as proudly as possible, as bending over looked unsightly due to my already large chest, but my back made cracking sounds.

'My physical condition is really bad. It feels like I have the flu and body aches at the same time.'

Still, I couldn't just lie down and rest.

When I woke up in Russia, I couldn't hear any radio transmissions from the Sirius on the short-range communicator and translator that Kang Dorim had made for me.

'I hope everyone returned safely.'

I left my phone at home worrying it might break during battle.

I wanted to go check the news quickly.

The aftermath left by the huge event of a nuclear war crisis would be terrifying.

I'm also worried about the situation in China.

'I wonder if Ichika is okay.'

I headed towards the central garden where the Grand Council was, with difficulty.

"Hmm…?"

Wheat field, bamboo forest, gray castle, rose garden.

I couldn't see the representatives of the self-governing bodies in any of those places.

"Everyone must be busy with the aftermath…"

I came out of the empty central garden and entered the Council building through the Council warp gate.

I needed to go to Sumire quickly to hear the progress report and discuss future measures.

In the warp gate office, an unbloomed magical girl in a suit was frantically creating a waiting list.

After using the warp gate without permission a few times before and messing up the usage records, I started reporting my entry and exit diligently after hearing Sumire's pleading voice.

"Excuse me…"

"Ah! Yes! Just a moment! There are too many people hoping to warp right now, so please wait!"

"No, I'm the one who returned from Russia…"

The administrative magical girl looked up sharply at those words.

"Huh?! Your Majesty?!"

"That title is a bit… Please just call me [Beginning]."

The administrative magical girl suddenly grabbed my hand and sobbed.

"Are we really establishing a country?! My house is in Sapporo, so the self-governing body can't be too far away…! Even if we establish one, will we also establish warp gates?"

"Huh? What do you mean by country?"

"T-this time, the representatives of the self-governing bodies are

creating a huge alliance together with the Free Magical Girl Federation people to establish an independent magical girl country, according to rumors…”

“Huh? Free Magical Girl Federation?”

“It’s an organization formed by magical girls who have been secretly taken from other countries by America all this time, expressing separatism from the country out of disappointment with America due to this incident…”

I could only be dumbfounded by all the shocking news coming from her mouth.

The administrative magical girl and I blinked and looked at each other.

“Did you not know?”

“No.”

The administrative magical girl’s complexion gradually turned pale.

Chapter 76 : Free Magical Girl Federation

Sumire, Kang Dorim, and Laura, who had been in a meeting with the self-governing bodies to plan personnel assignments and strategies for the search operation for the magical girl of [Beginning], returned.

“Your Majesty?!”

“Unnie?! We were so worried when we couldn’t contact you!”

“Sorry, I fainted for a while after using up too much power. How’s the situation in China?”

“[Freedom] and [Dagger] desperately fought and defeated the magical girl of [Sword]. We also retrieved her Glass Star.”

Sumire’s expression briefly clouded with guilt as she mentioned Ichika, who had once been at the Fujimoto research facility, while reporting to me.

‘Ichika… You won…!’

I felt a thrill at the tremendous news that [Sword], one of the remaining sources of anxiety, had been repelled. But sadness washed over me when I heard that victory was built on the sacrifice of 6 born 1-star magical girls and numerous soldiers.

Defense teams including Laura and Sumire were also on standby in Europe and Japan respectively, where the magical girl of [Revenge] might appear, but she didn’t show up in the end.

“I see. Everyone… fought desperately.”

“…Yes. Everyone desperately protected everything.”

After listening to Sumire explain the progress of operations in each country for a moment, I brought up what I had been curious about.

“What’s this about a magical girl country? What happened while I was unconscious for 3 days?”

“Ah, so that rumor has spread already…”

Kang Dorim clutched her head, seeming to ponder for a moment how to explain.

“People around the world were more shocked than expected by how the US, Russia, China, and Korea were brought to the brink of national destruction by the group calling themselves Scavengers.”

“But we stopped them. …Though not without any sacrifices.”

Sumire nodded at my words and continued.

“What brought the growing fear due to the Scavengers to a peak was the disappearance of nuclear weapons by the magical girl of [Beginning].”

“Because of me…? They’re scared of that?”

“That was on a scale that can only be called a miracle no matter how you look at it.”

Laura said with an expression that still seemed unable to believe it.

“The decisive trigger was that the magical girl of [Beginning] demonstrated power close to that of a god… incomparable even to those fearsome Scavengers.”

With the power of a single person to destroy a nation.

Replenishing infinite energy with starlight.

Creating imaginary giant weapons.

Self-sufficient in food and materials even if existing national infrastructure is destroyed.

Single-handedly eliminating thousands of the most powerful nuclear weapons created by humans.

“It’s like, do the old social orders like America or Russia even mean anything anymore?”

“Even now, the European magical girl self-governing body offices in Germany, Belgium, and France are full of people coming with various proposals.”

Billions of people around the world saw all the order and common sense they had been ruled by shattered, so they focused on magical girl society as a possible new world order. And the belief in the relationship that ‘magical girls exist under the state’, which hadn’t broken even while witnessing all kinds of magical girl activities, was overturned by this incident.

“People around the world now hold such awe and fear that they can no longer see the group of magical girls gathered as just another state agency or self-governing body.”

“Unnie, that’s how it is… Our influence has become so great and frightening that people can’t be satisfied with just saying we protect magical girls and help people.”

“…”

“Right now, the whole world needs the assurance that someone with absolute conviction is clearly controlling the magical girl organization.”

Just as ants might view a human hand raised to protect them with wariness. Even power rooted in good intentions instills great caution when it becomes too enormous.

A tremendous sense of pressure that couldn’t be felt from scenes of healing people or abilities shown in magical girl friendly matches.

‘Do they think I’ve now become someone who can influence the whole world, not just a protector of a specific group?’

The vivid sight of thousands of nuclear weapons vanishing in an

instant was more shocking than the surreal power of declaring domains and manipulating cognition and causality.

"…Then what about the Free Magical Girl Federation?"

"Apparently, America had been secretly extracting unaffiliated magical girls from around the world since last year and gathering them at a protection facility in New York."

All operation details were strictly delivered by hand, so even [Cyberbrain]'s ability couldn't detect it.

"They were trying to create a state-recognized organization modeled after the Council or Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team's operations, but were struggling because there was no one to be the center."

They were going to make an official announcement after absorbing the state-recognized magical girls of China and Korea during last year's attack by the magical girl of [Bombing], but it fell through.

While the group announcement was delayed, the Moscow incident occurred.

Nuclear counterattack.

Ruthless violence assuming the worst.

And behind that, a miracle.

The magical girls were thrilled by the enormous miracle the magical girl of [Beginning] performed to save people.

[The ideal we hoped for is not here.]

The magical girls who had gathered after hearing the US government would create an organization like the Council where magical girls could help people, left the protection facility.

[America is no longer the world's watchdog or protector. The old order we knew is over.]

[Only the magical girl of Beginning and the Grand Council think of both magical girls and other people simultaneously.]

[We, the Free Magical Girl Federation gathered from various countries, will now depart not for any specific country, but for a new order!]

And in just one night, 300 magical girls who had been relying on the protection facility disappeared without a trace after issuing a critical statement against America.

The world was turned upside down once again by America's secret plan exposed after the Moscow incident and the mass defection of magical girls.

"They all disappeared from New York?"

"…And those 300 appeared at Tokyo Port yesterday. And they keep insisting they will entrust themselves to the magical girl of [Beginning]."

"What? From America to Japan in a day? Did transportation-specialized magical girls like Natalia get involved?"

Kang Dorim shook her head at those words.

"The magical girl of [Navigation] didn't return to Russia and was pulling an all-nighter repairing the Sirius where the Russian team members who had been puppetized were being treated."

"Apparently there was a magical girl of [Wing] among the Free Magical Girl Federation who could grant movement ability."

It seems there was an ability user specialized in movement like [Transfer] who installed the warp gates we frequently use.

"Where are the Free Magical Girl Federation magical girls now?"

"We've agreed with the Japanese government to temporarily house them at the Relief Corps training dormitory."

I organized my thoughts after hearing Sumire's words.

Amidst the chaos from the Moscow incident, hundreds of magical girls in America defected, requesting to be entrusted to the Grand Council.

The Grand Council now with over 8000 affiliated magical girls.

In the eyes of people around the world, it's 8000 gathered of this enormous power where just one could bring down a country.

Magical girls who are starting to lead society with marvelous abilities, using independent resources and energy sources without regard for spatial meaning through warps and sky gardens.

And at the apex is the magical girl of [Beginning] who vaporized thousands of nuclear weapons launched by the US and Russia.

'What I created has grown too big. Now the whole world is anxious just by our existence.'

Although the number of magical girls itself hasn't changed much since most of Japan's magical girls were absorbed from the beginning.

Because I went around the world and changed them into a society that could unite magical girls within the domain.

Because I bound them not as powerful individuals but as a magical girl society with enormous explosive power through solidarity and harmony.

The world that overcame the moment of destruction now respects and fears magical girl society.

'Did I show all my power too generously, creating coexisting fear and worship?'

Wishing it to be a single kingdom absolutely ruled by one wearing the crown, not self-governing bodies that could scatter at any time.

And wishing that the one wearing that crown would be me, who had shown more righteous actions than anyone.

The faceless king.

The nickname with magical girls' characteristically exaggerated sensibility has now become the identity that people around the world want from me.

"…"

Should I accept it?

My first step was longing for my mother, and my first touch was help for a girl caught up in an incident.

Even when I was preparing to fight [War] by declaring domains, I didn't expect my influence to grow this much.

So that I could return without burden even after everything ended.

I induced those left behind to be able to manage on their own under the self-governing bodies.

I thought that level of presence for my existence was enough.

At first it was to protect myself from Fujimoto's threat, but I didn't take off the mask even after that.

I always hid my face with a mask and watched everything from behind.

"…"

…I couldn't give an answer yet.

"For now, let's head to the dormitory where the Free Magical Girl Federation is staying."

Chapter 77 : Free Magical Girl Federation

The diplomatic situations of the US and Russia were not just precarious, but pushed to the brink.

In fact, looking only at the causal relationships of the events, their choices could be understood.

Even if Russia made a foolish decision under the spell of [Puppet], it was done while their minds and bodies were controlled. The US also simply moved mechanically according to the established mutual assured destruction system and prepared for nuclear war.

When 1200 nuclear missiles were launched from Russia towards the White House, Pentagon, Washington, New York, etc.

The situation might have been different if they had waited with faith that those would disappear along with a miracle.

The US President eventually pressed the switch.

And thousands of nuclear weapons were eliminated by a miracle.

"…"

"…"

The underground bunker where the President and US military generals were gathered fell into a chilling silence.

Faced with an unexpected result, the US State Department and Department of Defense, which had been discussing post-nuclear war society, panicked.

And a fierce political backlash came towards the US President and

government who decided to launch nuclear weapons.

[One who tries to drive the whole world to destruction simultaneously.]

[What is mutual assured destruction for?]

Russia's government had long been paralyzed as well, since high-ranking officials including the President had been puppetized by the magical girl of [Puppet]. So after the Moscow incident ended, there was a vacuum period to form an interim government while treating those who had been puppetized.

[Although the military power of the US and Russia remains the same… diplomatically, it's a timing when they're unprecedentedly vulnerable!]

Taking advantage of the confusion of these two governments, all countries seeking opportunity launched intense diplomatic attacks.

They judged it was a golden opportunity to overturn the enormous order leading the world, rather than the circumstances of how nuclear weapons were launched and disappeared.

Added to that, the news that the US had been secretly extracting magical girls from other countries to create a state-recognized organization, and that they defected out of disappointment with America's actions, was good material to attack the US.

[We support the choice of 300 magical girls with unyielding conviction towards a country that made incorrect choices.]

All countries simultaneously applauded the courageous decision of the Free Magical Girl Federation while trying to strip the US of its justification as the world's watchdog.

Among them, Japan was attempting the most intense attack. They even actively expressed willingness to provide territory that could be operated independently to the Grand Council.

[We will provide an independent administrative zone operated only by them, respecting the society of supernatural ability users.]

They already knew about the Garden that only magical girls could enter. But this was a gesture to legally recognize them as a nation-scale group.

Behind that action was the desire to maximize the advantage of being deeply tied to magical girls through geographical and national connections. Furthermore, the ambition to step up as a permanent member of the UN Security Council to replace Russia as a country adjacent to supernatural ability society.

The Japanese government made desperate efforts, judging that coexisting with the magical girl of [Beginning] was now the correct answer rather than thousands of nuclear weapons.

And the attitudes of other countries were not much different, with only slight variations.

Just 3 days.

The whole world judged that if not now, a new order could not be established.

And at the center of that new order was the society magical girls belonged to.

While the Grand Council temporarily refused the UN emergency general assembly meeting request for follow-up on the Moscow incident, all countries were slowly forming plans to align with the next moves of the magical girl of [Beginning].

* * *

“I was moved by the miracle you showed!”

“I want to become a righteous magical girl like you!”

“To think you’re this beautiful even wearing a mask!”

“The black cloak is so cool too!”

“Ah… th-thank you.”

The magical girls of the Free Magical Girl Federation, who had crossed over from America overnight, were so lively. I thought they would be dispirited after coming over disappointed with America, but it was completely the opposite.

They were fitting for magical girls who had gathered with the single pride of belonging to the world's best state-recognized magical girl organization, despite differences in race, language, and country of origin.

Their expectations were shattered with one press of the nuclear launch button.

The girls of the Free Magical Girl Federation didn't know that I had briefly gone missing after the Moscow incident, so they were cheering that I was walking in fine after performing such a miracle.

"It's such an honor! Really beautiful and so elegant and with a nice voice! Oh my! With a mature appearance befitting the world's most noble magical girl!"

The most surprising thing was the born 2-star magical girl of [Lightning] who had coordinated the opinions of the Federation magical girls as a representative.

One of Yuki's travel companions, a serious magical girl.

Chen Lihua from Taiwan was there.

"Ah, that's… that much…"

Boing boing boing

"No! The righteous spirit of magical girls you've created is truly a noble and ideal philosophy that should be passed down for ages!"

Chen Lihua had long hair neatly pulled back and was wearing a white blouse and yellow skirt. And over that, she wore a white coat with a lightning pattern that was giving off faint yellow sparks. With a moved expression, she grabbed my hands and waved them up and down.

“Magical girls!”

“Lead people with dreams!”

“Magical girls!”

“Become hope for others!”

“Magical girls!”

“Save people!”

The resounding cries of 300 magical girls echoed in the auditorium used to educate new Relief Corps members or unbloomed magical girl volunteers.

‘This is driving me crazy. This girl wasn’t like this in the original work.’

The girl who had been shouting slogans in a lively voice since earlier must have made them recite since their time in New York, as the Free Magical Girl Federation girls spoke fluently in English.

Clap clap clap

“You all have the right magical girl spirit.”

Sumire smiled with satisfaction at that sight and applauded, and the administrative magical girls belonging to the Council and Relief Corps magical girls who had gathered to watch also nodded and applauded.

Clap clap clap clap clap

“That’s right. I still watch the debutante video once a day and it’s still moving.”

“Yes! The right magical girl spirit is not in country or ideology!”

With a face red from embarrassment, I shook hands with the 300 Free Federation magical girls who were requesting handshakes.

‘Why on earth has Chen Lihua, the magical girl of [Lightning] who

cynically criticized countries in the original work, become such a toxic fan…?'

When I saw the scene of Chen Lihua cynically explaining her view of nations to Yuki in the original work, I felt depressed too.

[Lihua, why don't you try to belong somewhere?]

[Yuki, when people gather, do you think it's possible to properly help others?]

[…Yes. Humans can't live alone. If someone teaches kindness, surely everyone can be happy.]

[No. You're wrong.]

[…]

[When humans gather, they only become selfish groups. No matter how altruistic a few humans are, they're crushed by the logic of resources and selfishness.]

[…But.]

[Whether groups or nations. Selfishness is always present in what humans create. It's meaningless in the end.]

So I was tense from the moment I heard there was a magical girl of [Lightning]…

Chen Lihua was launching a more threatening attack on me than any enemy I had met.

Like the voice of a recreation instructor asking the quietest friend in the class to come out during a middle school field trip. And like that sentence asking to try an image transformation in front of everyone.

"Great magical girl!"

"Magical girl of [Beginning]!"

"Queen of magical girls!"

“Please watch our debutante too!”

“Kind magical girl!”

“Faceless king!”

“Owner of the rose garden!”

My heart was pounding and I felt like I would be overwhelmed with shame at the shouts of girls of different races and languages.

“Please stop, it’s embarrassing. Please…”

“The king asks you to stop!”

“The king orders us to stop because it’s embarrassing!”

Silence.

In the auditorium, hundreds of beautiful girls were looking at me with sparkling eyes, covering their mouths with both hands out of respect. Blue, green, brown, yellow, orange, and various colored eyes all looked at me sparkling.

Chen Lihua winked while covering her mouth with her delicate hands.

I suddenly recalled the memory of the debutante from what felt like long ago.

Although it had only been about half a year, that first step where so many things had happened in between.

Countless roses.

Girls who found their dreams.

A magician blessing the girls’ transformations.

The karma of my attention-seeking act that mobilized all the boy and girl sensibilities latent within me had finally followed me here.

‘I should have toned it down a bit.’

Looking at the hundreds of magical girls in the auditorium with their mouths covered and eyes sparkling, I slightly regretted what I did then.

‘I should have gone with a more plain concept…’

Chapter 78 : Free Magical Girl Federation

After finishing the exciting face-to-face meeting, we called Chen Lihua, the representative, to the central garden to start a serious conversation.

“So… you’re saying that after learning all this, your home countries told you to join the Grand Council?”

“They said it would be better to go to a place that can safely protect magical girls.”

Chen Lihua added, with a slightly embarrassed expression, that she also heard resentful nagging from her family in her home country about why she believed such plausible words and went to America.

“Can we consider that you have now completely rejected America’s proposal?”

“Yes, when America persuaded us, they said they would establish the best state-recognized magical girl organization for people around the world… but for months in the New York protection facility, the only people we could see were high-ranking officials from political and business circles.”

Chen Lihua spoke with a voice that couldn’t hide her disappointment.

“They said our job was just to be personal nurses for high-ranking officials in political and business circles. And even when other countries faced crises, they didn’t think about lending a helping hand, only about absorbing supernatural ability users.”

“…”

And the decisive event was the Moscow incident.

They saw America showing no will to solve Russia's problem of being manipulated by a single magical girl, and only hurriedly counterattacking after nuclear weapons were launched.

"We thought that America could no longer play the role of world watchdog or protector, at least regarding magical girl issues."

"So you notified your home countries of all the facts?"

"Yes, since they brought us saying it was a choice for the world. When they cut off interest in the world, the promise was broken."

"…"

I could sympathize with Chen Lihua's assertion, but strictly speaking, the 300 Free Magical Girl Federation members had unilaterally broken their contract with America and fled.

'America is ultimately a country too, so there are unavoidable aspects… but they showed an image too opposite to their persuasive words.'

The two countries broke the order they had claimed themselves. And only other countries remained who witnessed their choices without any damage due to the miracle of nuclear weapons disappearing.

'The picture looks really bad. Even after understanding the circumstances, their actions were too extreme to defend.'

In fact, after hearing their revelations, even their original home countries were criticizing and reacting against America's actions.

Originally, the American ambassador and aides in Japan should have quickly come to persuade, but even they seemed to think it was difficult to control the Free Magical Girl Federation and made no contact.

"Actually, if you ask me for protection, I can establish a self-governing body for you without any conditions, but…"

“It can’t be helped. We were the ones persuaded by America first.”

After listening to my conversation with Chen Lihua, Sumire carefully brought up one proposal.

“Actually, the UN has requested to discuss with the magical girl of [Beginning] about what happened in this Moscow incident and the future direction of the magical girl self-governing body.”

“Ah, are you talking about the UN emergency general assembly?”

“Yes. They want to meet in person as soon as possible, adjusting all schedules within next month…”

“We only protect the will of magical girls themselves. We should let them know that persuading them is up to themselves.”

“Yes, I was thinking the same.”

America is just unable to bring it up right now because they’re dealing with political attacks. They’ll want to get the Free Magical Girl Federation to return to America as soon as possible.

‘And they won’t hesitate to use somewhat rough methods in the process.’

The magical girls themselves or even those around them.

Maybe they’re already moving to threaten them.

In that sense, it was helpful that they exposed everything to their home countries and made the issue big enough to prepare.

In the lull in the conversation, I called Chen Lihua who was looking around the central garden.

“As long as you’ve entered my domain, I’ll guarantee absolute safety. I’ll coordinate the details through the Grand Council and the UN.”

“Thank you! Magical girl of [Beginning]! As expected, you help others without any conditions! We should have come to you from the start…”

“…”

No.

I’m just extending help to the level I can, as much as the love I received in this world.

The truly unconditional magical girls who just loved and tried to help this world without conditions are elsewhere.

I’m just colorless, relying on their light.

That’s why I couldn’t answer proudly and just quietly smiled at Chen Lihua.

I accompanied Chen Lihua to send her back to the Relief Corps dormitory, and Sumire, Kang Dorim, and Laura left to coordinate things according to the newly changed schedule.

“The magical girl of [Beginning] has returned!”

“Wow! Representative Chen Lihua! Did you perhaps go to that famous central garden too?”

“Of course! I got permission and took pictures too.”

“Show us!!!”

Rumble

The 300 girls chattered while looking at the pictures Chen Lihua took of the garden, warp gate, and scenery of the self-governing body offices.

I was watching that sight with satisfaction when I recalled people I hadn’t been able to contact since leaving for Moscow.

‘Oh right. I need to contact Yuki and Ichika and also go meet Master.’

As I was about to leave, pondering who to meet first, there was a small hand that grabbed me.

“Huh?”

“…”

Golden eyes.

Golden hair.

Wings on her back like an angel.

White clothes reminiscent of an angel.

‘Judging by her outfit and atmosphere, she feels similar to Himari, the magical girl of [Nursing].’

But Himari is an only child and doesn’t have any magical girl relatives, so this must just be a similar-looking girl.

Above all, unlike Himari who has many human aspects in her own way, this girl had a cold impression.

This girl’s identity is probably the magical girl of [Wing] who helped move the Free Magical Girl Federation.

“Ma… magical girl of [Beginning].”

“Yes. Is there something? Do you need any help?”

“What do you act for?”

“Pardon?”

“What do you act for?”

“…”

The blonde girl with golden eyes staring at me repeated the same question expressionlessly.

A mechanical voice without intonation.

Mechanical eyes that never blinked.

The girl who looked like a beautifully crafted doll felt somewhat scary.

But from her expressionless face, a desperate mental image burst out strongly.

“…”

What for.

I don’t know if this girl will believe me, but.

I answered sincerely.

“To save humanity in this world.”

The girl heard my answer and nodded with a satisfied face for the first time, then replied.

As if it was truly the answer she wanted to hear, even a mental image of joy flowed from the magical girl of [Wing].

“That’s a relief.”

“Is that so?”

She took out a silver horn that looked like it was made from a conch shell from her bosom. Then she opened her tiny lips and blew it with all her might.

———!!!

The world resonated.

Literally, an enormous signal directly touching this world.

Not just a loud noise, but some signal with an even more enormous presence.

“Wh-what on earth was that just now?!”

I was flustered feeling some huge resonance spread, but the Free Magical Girl Federation girls around me were just excitedly looking at pictures of the sky garden, unaware of anything.

‘Only I… felt it?! Such an enormous sound?!’

“…In a few days, the land left by the first goddess will soon arrive, so don’t be too surprised.”

The first goddess.

“From now on, the divine maiden, not me, will explain.”

Divine maiden.

Magical girl of [Revelation].

I was very confused by those words that suddenly came out.

“My role ends here, so hearing any more of my answers would only confuse you further.”

Amidst the noisy girls.

The magical girl of [Wing] continued speaking in a calm voice.

Her figure was gradually disappearing.

“Please wait for the goddess’s territory to appear.”

“W-wait a moment! What is this all about!”

“It’s a relief. That you, who deviated from the journey prepared by the goddess, have the will for salvation yourself.”

Journey prepared by the goddess?

Goddess?

I recalled that girl who appeared when I shot the white arrow.

The magical girl of [Wing] spoke to me, politely grasping her skirt and bowing.

“We will meet again soon, so don’t worry. Kind successor… born from the goddess’s remains.”

“Wait a moment!!”

And the magical girl of [Wing] completely disappeared.

“…”

“Ah! Magical girl of [Beginning]! About this picture…”

“Chen Lihua.”

“Yes?”

“The magical girl of [Wing] has disappeared.”

“Wi-wing?”

“The magical girl who brought you all from America.”

“We came by telekinesis with the help of our companion, the magical girl of [Vitality]?”

“…”

Cognitive manipulation.

And changes to the world.

Probably the authority that the magical girl of [Revelation] never used until the end in the original work.

An ability all too familiar.

“I see.”

-Hang in there.

-You weren’t wrong.

What exactly does the goddess want from me?

And what did [Revelation], who showed the most passive behavior while wearing a hood in the original work, want to confirm from me?

For a while, I just stood still, overcome with shock.

Shikishima Yuki.

I was worried about her, and I could only consult her about matters concerning born 3-star magical girls.

I ran to Yuki, leaving behind the noisy auditorium.

Chapter 79 : The Call of the Goddess Religion

Knock knock

“Yuki, I’ll leave dinner at the door… Please eat it when you remember.”

“…”

Shikishima Ryota quietly placed some rice balls and a teapot of tea in front of his daughter’s door, who had been shut in for 4 days.

Just before the Moscow incident occurred, when ominous rumors erupted from Russia.

Ryota nearly fainted when he received the letter Yuki left.

[I’ll be going to Russia for a while. Don’t worry. —Yuki]

To think that his daughter, who had just started living like before again, was going to such a dangerous place.

‘I thought she’d been going out with friends since last December, but she said she’d been active as a magical girl.’

Although his daughter’s trip to Russia lasted only a day, that day was like hell for Ryota.

Nuclear war crisis. Extinction.

When he heard the news that couldn’t be more ominous at the pottery workshop, along with officials and police shouting to come to the shelter quickly, he really thought he was going crazy.

Around the time Ryota was anxiously waiting at home for his

daughter to return, Yuki came back. He was about to scold his daughter with worry for sticking her head into such a dangerous place.

“I’m home.”

“Yu-Yuki…?”

Completely empty eyes.

A dress burning fiercely.

Heat that seemed to dominate the space.

Ryota was surprised to see his daughter as a magical girl for the first time. The appearance of her quietly emitting a hot energy like embers and wrapped in red that flickered like flames was unfamiliar. And he couldn’t say anything, overwhelmed by Yuki’s spirit calling out endlessly for someone.

“…”

His daughter staggered into her room just like that, covered herself with a blanket, and stayed shut in for 4 days.

“Yuki, are you okay?”

Ryota was overcome with a desire for her to open up to him a little about what happened, and self-reproach that the awkwardness with his daughter still hadn’t disappeared.

Ding dong

“Huh? Yes, I’m coming.”

At the sudden doorbell sound, he thought perhaps someone had come urgently looking for him from the pottery workshop where he had taken leave.

‘At this time of evening? Did a large order suddenly come in from the department store? If so, the boss would have called.’

Amidst all this talk of war crisis and whatnot, he had told the pottery workshop boss about his daughter going to Russia as a magical girl and said he'd take a short break.

-Sure. You should see your children often when they're in your arms.

Thinking it didn't make sense for the boss, who clearly knew the situation, to suddenly visit his home, Ryota hesitated for a moment in front of the door.

"…"

Who could it be?

Already the police and magical girls were busy with various incidents these days. And he'd heard there were many thieves and hooligans going around doing bad things, taking advantage of the ominous atmosphere. Ryota stood in front of the door and quietly raised his phone to try to make a report.

"W-wait a moment?!"

A woman?

He got goosebumps at the frail voice that cut in just as he had decided to make an accurate report. But with his wariness lowered from before, Ryota carefully opened the front door with the door chain still on.

"Ah… hello?"

"Um… who are you…?"

"Yuki's friend."

"…"

Western features and flowing silver hair.

A tall stature that didn't match her youthful face.

A mature figure beyond adults and slender eyes.

“…”

A girl with an extraordinary appearance that anyone could see was claiming to be his ordinary daughter’s friend.

Ryota was suspicious that this girl with elegant Western features who clearly belonged to high society was calling herself his plain daughter’s friend and had come at dinner time.

‘Should I report this?’

His suspicion grew even more because he had heard there were many suspicious groups approaching magical girls as if they were friends or seniors.

“P-please don’t. I really am her friend.”

For some reason, it even felt like this girl was reading Ryota’s mind.

“No! That’s not it! I really am her friend! Mr. Shikishima! Please listen to me!”

The girl urgently recited Yuki’s favorite way of eating udon and the places she goes for walks on weekends, trying to prove she was Yuki’s friend.

“How… do you know all that…?”

It was a bit overwhelming to see her reciting in detail even parts that he, as her father, didn’t know well.

“Yuki told me! Please believe me!”

Ryota couldn’t believe that his daughter, who always went around alone and was timid and quiet, had told all her trivial daily life to this girl in just a month.

‘…Come to think of it, Yuki was glued to her smartphone all month.’

Ryota finally let go of his suspicion and opened the door chain to welcome the girl.

“Well, I see. I’m Shikishima Ryota, Yuki’s father. I’m sorry. I was too rude to my daughter’s friend.”

“No, it’s understandable. Things are really ominous these days.”

* * *

I awkwardly waited in the living room with the tea Ryota had prepared in front of me, waiting for Yuki to come out of her room.

‘It’s my first time seeing Yuki’s father’s face.’

Shikishima Ryota’s face looked like an older brother only a few years older than me in my previous life. So I couldn’t bring myself to call him ‘mister’. My conscience was too troubled to call someone ‘mister’ whom I would have called ‘hyung’ if I had met him at work.

‘Well, if you get married and have a child in your early 20s and about 15 years pass, I guess you’d be about that age.’

I was envious of Ryota, who had a cute and lovely daughter like Yuki, because I had lived a life far from dating while working part-time jobs until my late 20s, let alone getting married.

‘If it were me, if I had a kind and pretty daughter like Yuki, I’d carry her around on my back every day.’

As I was inwardly envying Mr. Shikishima, the faces of the Sato couple also came to mind.

‘Actually, the Sato couple weren’t that many years apart from me in my previous life either…’

Because I knew the ups and downs that Mr. Shikishima and the Sato couple had gone through, blindly envying them seemed like ignoring the sadness they had experienced. But I couldn’t help feeling envious of them for having built happy families with their lovely daughters.

While I was thinking about that, Ryota came out to the living room with a restless expression.

“I’m sorry. It seems Yuki has fallen asleep… She’s been shut in her

room lately and won't come out."

"Ah… I see."

The Moscow incident must have been a big shock to Yuki, probably making her recall the nightmare of destruction again.

'What should I do? I wanted to consult with Yuki about [Revelation] quickly.'

I pondered for a moment, then tried to get up, thinking it would be troublesome for Mr. Shikishima to just keep waiting like this.

"Would you like to at least see her face before you go?"

"What? Her f-face?"

"Actually, it's the first time I've seen my daughter so happy to have made a friend. I thought seeing her friend's face might cheer her up…"

Yuki's room.

That room she always longed for and wanted to return to in the original work.

I wanted to see it at least once.

'Now that we're both girls, she probably won't be embarrassed, right?'

In the end, I couldn't overcome my curiosity.

"Well then, shall I take a look before I go?"

I followed Ryota's guidance to the front of Yuki's room.

"She didn't eat dinner… in the end."

The rice balls and teapot that Ryota had prepared were sitting coldly in front of the hallway. Ryota cleaned them up with a sad expression and knocked on Yuki's door.

Knock knock

“Yuki. Your friend is here. Do you want to say hello?”

“…”

“Yuki?”

Ryota carefully turned the doorknob and saw Yuki lying in bed in the dark room, wrapped up in blankets to her head like a cocoon.

I carefully entered her room.

The room where she had grown up since she was young smelled warm like sunshine.

Picture frames.

Photos recording the moments of Yuki growing up were hung in frames on her room’s walls.

The frames with photos of her taken with her father stopped being added after age 9.

Her painful memories of always struggling with loneliness from age 9.

“…”

Seeing that made my heart ache, so I sat down next to the bed and gently stroked Yuki’s head as she lay there.

“Yuki.”

“…Hm?”

Yuki looked at me with a drowsy face from under the blanket.

“Hika…ri.”

“I’m here.”

Yuki stared at me blankly for a moment, then spoke in a very cracked

voice.

“…Don’t go.”

“Huh?”

“Don’t… leave without saying anything.”

“…”

“Don’t… suddenly… disappear.”

“…”

Among those who worried when I briefly went missing, Yuki was probably the one who truly felt anxious thinking about death. For her, the death of a comrade must have been a sickeningly familiar and painful thing.

“I’m sorry.”

“You were bad…”

Yuki pushed my chest lightly with her head poking out of the rolled-up blanket.

That attack didn’t hurt at all, but for some reason my heart ached terribly.

A slight feeling of resentment.

“Ba…d.”

“…”

“If it’s not you… I’ll be alone again.”

“I’m sorry.”

Thump.

“You were bad.”

“I won’t do it again from now on.”

Thump.

“You were bad…”

I gently hugged Yuki as she kept lightly hitting me with her head.

Although I can’t stay by her side forever because I have to leave someday, I hope this friend with many wounds will become strong.

Praying that she will make many friends who can share her heart by her side.

I just hugged her like that for a while.

Yuki stayed still in my arms, shedding a single tear.

“…”

“…”

Yuki, who had been silent, suddenly raised her face and spoke in a flustered voice.

“…This isn’t a dream, is it?”

“…No.”

“Yuki, should I… should Dad step out for a moment?”

“…No.”

We shared an awkward silence for a moment.

Yuki hid back under the blanket just like that.

“Yuki, do you want to eat dinner?”

“Yes… Dad.”

Chapter 80 : The Call of the Goddess Religion

“Actually, I don’t know much about the magical girl of [Revelation] either. All I could confirm was [Revelation]’s combat style using blessings received from a transcendent being.”

Yuki changed from her magical girl outfit that she had been wearing for 4 days straight into pink rabbit pajamas after taking a bath. Then she sat on the bed and told me about the magical girl of [Revelation] she had met with a serious expression.

-Miss Shirogane, it’s getting late, so feel free to stay overnight.

Ryota, seeing his daughter regain her spirits after meeting me, urged me to stay the night.

‘I didn’t expect to have dinner with the Shikishima family and spend a night in the protagonist’s room.’

I was somewhat familiar with it since I had been invited to stay overnight at Sato Hana’s house before. But unlike staying in the guest room at Hana’s house, this time I would be staying in Yuki’s room.

Yuki’s clothes didn’t fit me, so I looked ridiculous in them. Lying on the floor with a futon spread out in my own casual clothes, I felt strangely unfamiliar. As a fan of the original work, should I say it feels like I’ve achieved everything there is to achieve now?

‘No. I need to focus since we’re in the middle of an important conversation.’

I pushed aside those sentiments and listened attentively to Yuki’s words.

“Unlike [War] or [Death], I’ve never had a proper conversation with [Revelation]. She was especially indifferent to her surroundings, even among the three born 3-stars who could communicate. So I didn’t even know if there were magical girls belonging to her domain.”

[War]’s declaration.

[Death]’s domain.

Battle with [Bombing].

They left Japan, crossed over to Russia, and arrived at the Arctic. At the midpoint of the journey back to Japan, the third of six trials began.

The trials always came with an infinite downpour of demons, and each trial demon was a huge monster hundreds of meters tall.

The first trial, the lion demon, completely paralyzed Japan.

The second trial, the viper demon, contaminated the European coasts with poison.

And then came the third trial.

The endlessly charging boar destroyed everything as it crossed Russian land, and people gradually fled outwards.

Finally, as people abandoned land and headed to sea by boat, the magical girl of [Revelation] appeared before them.

Yuki urgently asked for help from her, who had instantly cleared the small demons that had been driven to the coast along with an infinitely multiplying rain of arrows received from God’s protection.

But the magical girl of [Revelation] firmly refused and turned her back.

[Why won’t you help people!]

[Because that is not the role given to us.]

The magical girl of [Revelation], pressing down her hood, headed somewhere into the sea again and exited the scene just like that.

In the end, Yuki formed a temporary alliance with scavenger magical girls who extorted civilians to repel the boar that had come right up to their noses. And they won with dozens of magical girl casualties as Chen Lihua, the magical girl of [Lightning], self-destructed inside the boar's mouth.

A battle with no gains, no one grateful, just dead people left behind.

Despairing in the Arctic where she had gone hoping to revive her father. It happened just before returning to Japan again.

"…"

"Hm? Hikari, what's wrong?"

"Nothing. I'm just glad Yuki is still kind…"

"D-don't say that."

Hearing my words, Yuki suddenly covered her face with the blanket and hid towards the inner side of the bed. Then she peeked at me through the gap in the blanket, fidgeting.

'She looks like a pink rabbit hiding in a cave.'

I was proud of Yuki for not becoming completely emotionless or lethargic out of disappointment in humans after going through all that.

"Yuki."

"Yes?"

"I'm glad Yuki is Yuki."

"What?!"

Yuki opened her eyes wide enough to be seen through the gap in the blanket, then hurriedly went deep into the blanket, completely

turning into a pill bug. Then she pleaded while trembling.

“Hikari, wait a moment!! I-I’m not mentally prepared yet…!”

“Yuki.”

“J-just a moment!! I’m really sorry but I need to prepare myself!!”

“Do you know what the word ‘apostle’ means?”

“…Huh?”

“It seems [War], [Death], [Plague], and [Revelation] call each other apostles. I thought maybe I might be one of those apostles too.”

“W-well, I don’t know much about that either. Sorry.”

“No, it’s okay. I only found out recently too.”

I thought it couldn’t be helped since even I, who had read the original work with narration and explanations added, didn’t know this fact.

The Scavengers, presumed to be influenced by the magical girl of [War].

The keyword ‘goddess’s apostle’ mentioned by Doctor, the magical girl of [Puppet], had remained in my mind all along.

Emily Hopkins, [War]’s messenger and a likely figure behind all this, was still calmly maintaining her daily life.

‘Should I deal with Emily even now?’

But for some reason, the voice felt beyond the colorless star was strongly discouraging attacking her.

Is this also the goddess’s will?

The goddess’s apostle.

‘What does the goddess want from me?’

Why did she make me the magical girl of [Deception]?

-Please think about the meaning of deception for everyone.

-It's a relief. That you, who deviated from the journey prepared by the goddess, have the will for salvation yourself.

The path I started to save those around me gradually widened to a path for humanity in this world. And now even the goddess was starting to enter that path.

A great path.

Am I moving towards a great path that can embrace both the goddess who gave me strength and all my precious people?

'Mother…'

In this path that had grown too big, I always thought of my mother.

'Yuki said only her father was left.'

Come to think of it, Yuki and I had too many things in common.

Trying to distance ourselves from people but longing for them.

Having lost our parents.

Moving forward relying on vague hope while knowing it's a foolish path.

That might be why I couldn't forget <Magical Girl HAZARD> that I read in middle school.

"Yuki."

"Yes?"

"Have you ever… thought about wanting to see your mother?"

"Mom?"

"Yeah… actually, I can't meet my parents anymore either."

“What…? Hikari too?”

This was the first time I was telling her about my circumstances, other than that I’m not from this world and that I know all about Yuki’s battles. Hearing this, Yuki suddenly sat up and looked at me as if she couldn’t believe it.

Tears gradually welled up in her eyes.

“Yes. Before coming to this world, my father had already passed away, and my mother… well.”

The moment I tried to explain calmly to her.

It felt like something was going to come up in my throat.

I stopped speaking for a moment.

Yuki watched me for a while, then carefully got down from the bed and warmly held my hand as I lay on the futon.

“Yeah. I think I understand.”

“…Sorry. It’s hard to speak.”

“Yeah. I know.”

Yuki quietly spoke while holding my right hand with both of hers as I lay there.

A voice that felt gentle, clear yet warm and subtle like a quietly burning candle.

“I always wanted to see her. Even when it seems okay, I suddenly wonder what it would be like if she were here.”

“…”

“And I wanted to become someone my mom wouldn’t be ashamed of.”

“…”

“I didn’t act like that most of the time though…”

“No, you did.”

“…Thank you.”

After finishing speaking, Yuki muttered something with my hand against her forehead as if praying.

Her warm body temperature transmitted through my fingertips.

May you be happy.

Perhaps that’s what she said.

‘May you be happy too.’

I replied inwardly to those words.

After praying for a moment, she brought the blanket from the bed, lay down next to me, held my hand again, and smiled broadly.

I held Yuki’s hand in return and tried to sleep.

My heart filled with relief and warmth, as if I had found a single candle while wandering a vague and dark corridor.

Though it couldn’t illuminate the entire dark corridor, at least it was enough to not feel anxious.

Perhaps I didn’t come here to get answers from Yuki.

“Good night, Yuki.”

“Good night, Hikari.”

* * *

January 25th

“I-Ichika?!”

“Oh, Leader. As expected, you were safe. I believed in you.”

Heng.

When I returned to my apartment, which was my home, I saw Ichika sitting cross-legged in the air, wrapped in a faint green energy, quietly with her eyes closed.

“I also gained some insights from this fight, you know.”

Behind her familiar casual clothes, a thousand strands of green energy were tangled, making it look like she had a thousand hands, and green lotus flowers were rising one by one from the ground below her as she floated serenely.

Unlike in the past when she analyzed space with a threatening green storm, the faintly rising green lotus flowers were completely dominating the space.

And what I could see with my eyes connected to the world was…

‘A giant? A giant with a thousand arms?’

It seemed Ichika had made it transparent in her own way.

But to my eyes, I could see a green giant tens of meters tall sitting cross-legged in the same posture as Ichika in the air above the apartment courtyard.

“You… fully bloomed on your own?”

“Yep.”

“That’s… amazing.”

“Hmph.”

Ichika snorted once and unfolded her legs, striding over to me.

“Hmm…”

Ichika quietly analysed me.

As she drew up her power, her hair and eyes glowed green.

“Wow, you’ve really become a monster now? Even ten of my current selves wouldn’t be enough.”

“That’s too much, really.”

Ichika shook her head and folded her arms.

“Leader, more importantly, we have a big problem.”

“Why? What happened?”

“The water and electricity in the apartment have been cut off since I came back from China.”

“…”

That really is a big problem.

Chapter 81 : The Call of the Goddess Religion

I sat in the apartment courtyard and listened to Ichika about the fierce defense battle that took place in China and the aftermath that followed.

“…So Li Na and Li Meilin cried all night after the battle ended, barely pulled themselves together, and held a joint funeral. The people who evacuated from Beijing returned to their places.”

“I see. Everyone worked hard, and I’m sorry I was the only one who collapsed.”

“Well, if you hadn’t stopped the nuclear weapons, we wouldn’t have the luxury to talk like this!”

Hahaha

Ichika laughed heartily until her stomach hurt, then handed me the Glass Star left by the magical girl of [Sword] and silently looked at the clear winter sky for a moment.

A sky without a single cloud, shining beautifully and piercingly.

Under the quiet sky, Ichika suddenly asked me a question.

“Leader.”

“What?”

“Is this world going to end soon?”

“…”

“Somehow I’ve been feeling it since I fully bloomed recently. Like ‘At

this rate, humanity is in big trouble!'"

"…Yes."

"Then have you been acting like you know everything to prevent that? For example, starting from Fujimoto."

"Yes."

"I see. Then nothing has changed."

"Huh?"

Ichika gently raised her eyes, tinged with a faint green, and smiled.

As brightly as a sunflower blooming on a summer day.

She was smiling like a hot summer flower blooming under the cold sky.

"I fight believing in you. And you entrust me believing in me."

"…"

Seeing that smile, I carefully brought up words I hadn't been able to say to Ichika until now.

"Weren't you suspicious of me all this time, Ichika?"

"About what?"

"About how I perceive and act on the traps and magical girls of <Magical Girl HAZARD> that no one else knows about. If you were curious, I could have told you."

Despite that, Ichika and Kyoko never once questioned me suspiciously about why I knew. Not once did they ask what I was preparing.

They just helped their best in their own positions.

"Xìn (Belief)."

“Huh?”

Ichika, who had muttered something in Chinese, spoke to me in Japanese again.

“Because there’s belief between you and me.”

“Belief?”

“You never once asked ‘Why are you so good at fighting?’, ‘How do you know that?’, ‘What have you been doing?’ and helped Kyoko and me.”

“…”

“That’s why I also believed in you without asking anything. At least the actions of yours that I saw were full of righteousness.”

“I see. Thank you.”

Ichika grinned and held out her fist, and I grinned back and bumped fists with her.

Thump

The hand of the girl I met in a seaside warehouse on a summer day was rough like a stone but full of warm belief.

“I’m counting on you from now on too, friend.”

“Yeah. Thanks… friend.”

We were lost in romance for a moment with our fists bumped together, then returned to cold reality.

“Oh, but what should we do now? We can’t find new rent at this point.”

“Water and electricity?”

“Yeah. Kyoko seems to be having a hard time.”

“What’s Kyoko doing?”

“Seems she’s staying in the guest room at the cafe master’s place for now.”

“I see. That’s good.”

Even after the Christmas party when I realized the sense of discomfort I had about this apartment, the rent envelopes no longer disappeared. At the same time, it was gradually turning into an abandoned building as if something in the system constituting this apartment had been shattered.

“I think it’s about time to move.”

“Heng. It would be funny to have another housewarming party after just half a year.”

Several candidate places that could be used as residences came to my mind.

Since there’s a warp gate, we could move between self-governing body offices and dormitories. Maybe we could even live together in the Relief Corps building where the Free Magical Girl Federation is staying. It would be chaotic enough now that changing addresses and such doesn’t matter.

Wherever we go, I’ll inevitably have to reveal my face… it seems the time has come to reveal my identity as well.

‘Honestly, I wonder if there’s any point in hiding that I’m a girl named Shirogane Hikari anymore.’

Unlike last summer when I thought it was a success to just nervously keep an eye on the surroundings including the Garden. Now I wanted to receive help from a wider world and try to save more people.

‘To win the fight against [War] who wants chaos, I’ll probably have to stand in front of everyone.’

Now that my presence has grown enough to have a voice in the world, it’s time to let them know.

The fate of this world.

The mission of magical girls.

And what I want to do.

Perhaps wearing the crown they want from me was an unavoidable thing due to my actions and karma.

To move towards an even greater path.

To be a man not ashamed before my mother.

To be a girl more noble than anyone.

Maybe the only path left was to magnificently overcome all destruction and return proudly.

-May you be happy.

I wasn't afraid because I realized anew in just one night that there were people who showed me such infinite affection and trust.

"Ichika. I'm thinking of creating a magical girl kingdom, can you help me?"

"Huh? Then who should I beat up first? If it's not Fujimoto Eiji, I'm still thinking of slapping him once."

I couldn't help but laugh at the answer that came without a moment's hesitation. And seeing that, Ichika also chuckled and left the apartment saying she'd go see Kyoko.

'Oh right, my phone.'

Before solving the residence issue, I felt I should contact people around me, so I went into the apartment room and turned on my phone.

Ding dong ding dong ding dong ding dong

'Yuki…'

The incoming message sounds from the messaging app pouring in as soon as I turned on the phone.

457 messages.

All of them were from Yuki.

I smiled bitterly as I looked at the messages she had sent up until just before I visited Yuki's house. While I was pondering how to reply, suddenly my Glass Star also started ringing.

'Huh? The Council?'

It was a call from Sumire.

———!!!

And at the same time, a presence that felt like the air was trembling warned me, beating against all my skin.

A huge power had invaded my domain.

An enormous resonance.

That resonance contained a power of the world greater than a fully bloomed 3-star.

And the being containing that power was calling me.

* * *

"Wh-what on earth is this…"

"An island…?"

Hundreds of coast guard members aboard ships and huge cargo ships stood still, staring straight ahead.

Although there should only be the endless Pacific Ocean spread out before them.

In the waters off Chiba Prefecture, there was a huge island that didn't exist until yesterday.

[This is the waters near Chiba Prefecture!]

[I repeat, this live broadcast is showing the actual situation without any editing!]

[As you can see, a huge island has appeared in the waters off Chiba Prefecture!]

[The size of this island is being confirmed to be comparable to a local Japanese city!]

Reporters from broadcasting stations were continuously reporting the sudden appearance of the island from helicopters, their voices almost breaking.

[We can see people on the island! Girls… girls wearing white clothes are on the island!!]

A square rocky island that looked as if it was carved out of a huge white rock.

It was full of all kinds of flowers and plants, and there was a village built in ancient architectural style in a corner of the island.

A village where dozens of buildings made by carving white rocks were clustered haphazardly.

Dozens of girls wearing white clothes who had come out to the huge open space in front of the village.

In the center of the village stood a dazzling white lighthouse proudly. Boasting a size comparable to a dozens-story building that was hard to believe the girls had made.

[The appearance of this island is like… like the garden of gods appearing in mythology.]

It was such an astonishing sight that no one rebuked the reporter's dazed comparison.

And at the top of the huge white lighthouse.

A girl standing on a white disc recording the movement of stars was wrapped in white cloth over her slender body, and her hood was

pressed down so deeply that her appearance couldn't be seen.

That girl slowly took off her hood.

Silver hair swaying in the sea breeze.

Skin whiter than any jewel.

And red eyes that seemed to suck you in.

She spoke.

"Following the order of the first goddess, we have come to transfer the Goddess's Garden to 'the one who connects lies'."

Her soft voice sounded like Japanese but mixed with a peculiar intonation.

"O successor who has glimpsed the future and come, who seeks to save humanity."

A beautiful and rhythmic but eerie voice that felt like a machine.

"Accept the last arrangement prepared by the goddess before destruction."

The language of the mythical age passed down since the time when human language was only one.

"Inherit the will of the first goddess."

Although the sound of her speaking from atop the lighthouse should have been erased by the sea breeze and inaudible, it was clearly heard by thousands of people who had gathered to see the island and millions of witnesses.

"The first… goddess?"

"The first goddess."

"The first goddess."

Everyone there murmured those words.

The age when gods and humans coexisted, now forgotten by humanity.

The first teaching older than records.

It was the moment when the Goddess Religion, a fragment of that teaching, revealed itself again after tens of thousands of years.

Chapter 82 : The Call of the Goddess Religion

The Goddess's Garden.

Unlike its grand name, the huge island was rather desolate.

Compared to my domain, which seemed to embody an ideal earthly paradise, my garden had a living aesthetic as if cultivated by human hands, while the Goddess's Garden looked like exotic plants had been left in nature.

Plants that had grown in an isolated environment, unlike modern varieties bred for certain traits.

Some trees bloomed water-filled buds in the middle of their trunks.

Some flowers reacted to Yuki's and my footsteps, bowing their heads to the ground.

'I can't feel any magical girl magic.'

It seemed an ecosystem of a kind we had never seen before had been maintained.

But everything was just a backdrop to highlight that overwhelming white lighthouse visible beyond the dozens of kilometers of plains.

"…"

"…"

Except for the sound of helicopters flying overhead broadcasting live images of the island, the island was incredibly quiet.

[Only those who have seen the future and inherited the first lie are

allowed entry.]

A message left by silver-white starlight emitted from the lighthouse.

Another bombshell statement dropped amid worldwide attention focused due to the word ‘destruction’ carelessly uttered by the divine maiden, the magical girl of [Revelation].

The first goddess.

One who has seen the future.

The first lie.

People around the world instinctively felt they were witnessing a historic moment here.

‘…Rather, with attention focused like this, I should take this opportunity to reveal the truth about magical girls to the world.’

I came up with ideas to use this surreal and dramatic situation. And I informed Ichika, Sumire, Kang Dorim, Laura, and Li Meilin that this could be our huge turning point. Despite the chaotic situation, they said they would trust me and quietly watched the situation.

Yuki and I transformed and plunged onto the island, levitating each other’s bodies with telekinesis.

After walking side by side for an hour.

“Hi-Hikari. On top of the lighthouse…!”

“Yeah.”

Long silver hair fluttering in the sea breeze.

A peculiar outfit that looked like something between a dress and priestly robes, made by wrapping a large white cloth around the body.

Red eyes like carved rubies embedded in her face.

She was watching us from atop the lighthouse.

Bloomed born 3-star magical girl of [Revelation]

Nameless Divine Maiden

With a tingling presence that made even fully bloomed 3-stars seem trivial, and enormous starlight burning the hundreds of meters tall lighthouse like a silver-white torch.

The Divine Maiden and I facing each other precisely across several kilometers.

And girls with blonde hair and golden eyes bowing their heads politely in front of the white village below the lighthouse. One of them was the familiar magical girl of [Wing].

'All of them… are magical girls. And bloomed ones at that.'

About 10 of them felt like they had born 2-star level power. The rest of the dozens, even if born 1-stars, were either on the verge of awakening or possessed power far superior to other 1-star magical girls.

"…"

10 of the 100 born 2-stars gathered here.

Dozens of 1-stars with outstanding potential like Yuki or Hana.

This island would be safer than any country except for the magical girl society I created when the time of destruction approaches. And in an era without magical girl society, it could rightly be called humanity's final ark.

"Hikari, what on earth is this island…"

Yuki seemed to tremble, belatedly sensing the starlight of the girls living in the village below the lighthouse.

And a surge of resentment.

"This… you had such land and power and pretended not to know…?"

Red flames flowing out like tears of injustice.

She was showing her anger by spewing flames in front of me for the first time. I grabbed Yuki's hand and spoke urgently.

"Yuki, if I fight a born 3-star, I can't guarantee your safety."

"…Okay. I understand. I'm sorry, Hikari."

"No, I'm really angry too, but…"

Yuki shook her head, then smiled sadly as if understanding everything, and bowed her head.

"…"

Still, I had to hear from the Divine Maiden.

Why don't the apostles try to save humans?

What is <Magical Girl HAZARD>?

What is the will left by the first goddess?

"Welcome to the land of the Goddess Religion."

As we approached the front of the village, the magical girls with blonde hair and golden eyes, including the magical girl of [Wing], all gave welcoming greetings.

Listening closely, there was a sense of discomfort in their words.

'Korean? No… it sounds like Japanese too.'

I could feel traces of all the languages I knew, yet what they were trying to say was conveyed accurately. It was chilling that while the sound I heard was clearly an unfamiliar language, I could understand its meaning precisely.

"As I said. From here on, the Divine Maiden will tell you."

"…"

Thump.

Despite jumping down from hundreds of meters up, there was only a light sound as if jumping from a first-floor window.

Fluttering silver hair.

And red eyes quietly gazing.

The Divine Maiden.

The magical girl of [Revelation].

I faced one of the four set up as the strongest characters in the work, a bloomed born 3-star magical girl I was meeting for the first time.

"…"

"…"

I looked at her with my slender eyes opened as wide as possible.

She also gazed at me with a mechanical gaze.

Two pairs of red eyes.

Suddenly, facing her, I thought it was funny.

All the magic and strategies I had imagined alone for the first two years in this world to escape from the magical girl of [War]. They were all just useless tricks in front of a born 3-star magical girl who had bloomed true power.

Even now, [Revelation]'s combat ability, judged by frantically seeking out possibilities with cause and effect reversal, was about one level below me.

Reading battle patterns learned from Ichika.

The unique skill of cause and effect reversal I realized myself.

Unique weapon transformation learned from Yuki.

Realizations that gave me tremendous development each time I learned them one by one.

Various skills acquired to protect.

Using all of that, I barely managed to stay one step ahead.

I felt foolish for my past self who imagined I could survive against [War] at this level without knowing anything and alone.

“Successor.”

“Divine Maiden.”

We finally faced each other, calling each other.

The Divine Maiden looked at me for a moment, then spoke mechanically.

“Why didn’t you go to school?”

“…What?”

“Shibuya East Girls’ Middle School.”

“How do you know that…?!”

“I had connected fate so that you could be educated in this world’s common sense there, meet the witness who returned with the power of revival, and prepare for destruction, but you didn’t go.”

A shock like being hit on the head with a hammer came.

The chilling imagination I had just before the Christmas party.

What if I had met Yuki early before becoming a magical girl, become close like Sato Hana, and clung to each other without doing the debutante or domain declaration, relying on original work knowledge.

What if all the memories built with the past Yuki were shattered one day by the memories of Yuki returning from the future.

Even then, would I have tried to save this world?

Did this one think I would move like a machine after experiencing all that?

“In any case, you were able to meet [Revival] again, and you clearly have the will to save humanity, so you should be qualified as the successor. From now on…”

Yuki, whose face had turned pale hearing the Divine Maiden’s words, spoke in bewilderment.

“You… remember the previous world? How?”

The magical girl of [Revival].

That was a name Yuki could no longer use in this world.

“I too transmitted memories to carry out the goddess’s orders using fragments left after the final trial.”

“Even the memories of the boar?”

“You mean the third trial?”

“Why did you do that!!! There were people throwing themselves into the sea because there were no boats!!!”

“Because the history of a world where the successor hasn’t awakened has no meaning beyond observation.”

Hearing those words, Yuki could no longer maintain her composure and sat down crying. Even seeing this, the Divine Maiden continued speaking.

“The goddess’s order was, when the world regression due to [Revival]’s eternal recurrence occurred, to have the awakened successor adapt to this world. And to have the successor meet the returned [Revival] and hear about everything that happened.”

The Divine Maiden answered while staring expressionlessly at Yuki.

“Because if the successor who fulfilled all conditions had even a little will for salvation, the Goddess’s Garden, designated as humanity’s final domain, was to be handed over.”

“…”

I too asked the Divine Maiden in a dumbfounded voice.

“Then… from the beginning, the first goddess didn’t intend to save everyone?”

“It’s more accurate to say she didn’t expect the successor to save all of humanity.”

“The things I’ve done… the magical girl society… wasn’t the goddess’s will? Are you saying what I’ve been doing was unrelated to the goddess’s plan?”

“That’s right.”

The Divine Maiden spoke with a rather questioning tone.

“Successor. Why did you know about the trials and the curse sown by the three goddesses even before [Revival] returned?”

The curse sown by three goddesses.

This too was something I was hearing for the first time.

“How does a soul from a completely different universe know this world’s common sense and future?”

“…”

Amid the confusion, one thing was clear.

If I hadn’t stepped forward on my own.

If things had flowed as prepared by this terrible order-following machine.

Forget the goddess’s salvation, nothing would have worked out properly.

Chapter 83 : The Call of the Goddess Religion

In the beginning, the world was only chaos.

A mass of endlessly circulating starlight within a star containing enormous power.

From within, the largest fragment broke off and gained form and will.

The daughter of the world.

The first goddess.

In the chaos where nothing was determined, she whispered to the small starlights looking at her that the world was divided into sky and earth. Hearing those words, the small starlights believed for the first time that they were standing on the ground and looking up at the sky.

“Daughter of the world, then what is that flowing there?”

“That is the sea.”

“Daughter of the world, then what is that hot thing there?”

“That is fire.”

“Daughter of the world, then what is this warmth that rises when we are together?”

“That is love.”

The more she told the formless small starlights about the world, the more rapidly the daughter of the world’s power diminished. As the

stars changed their perception of looking at the world, she consumed power no different from creation.

After the starlights and the daughter of the world exchanged ten thousand questions and answers.

The daughter of the world became incomparably weaker than before.

The world the starlights saw was no longer endless chaos.

The starlights played, engraving into the world what the goddess had taught them. And they changed their own appearances to be exactly like the daughter of the world, which they thought was the most beautiful.

They were no longer formless starlights, but humans with golden and silver eyes.

Because everything they imagined came true, there was no boundary between dream and reality.

Because there was no separation in the golden and silver starlight, there was no boundary between life and death.

An age when everyone emitted starlight.

They called the first age the [Golden Age].

They called the daughter of the world who guided them the goddess of [Beginning].

Because everyone could remember when words were spoken, they didn't leave records.

Because whatever they wanted appeared just by thinking about it, they didn't make things.

Because they were reborn with starlight even when their bodies collapsed at the end of their lifespan, they didn't fear death.

Because their own appearance was more beautiful than anything else, they didn't try to possess other things.

The first goddess loved the first humans who perceived the world according to her words and imitated her appearance. An age when the boundary between humans and gods was blurred. She played together with them in the same world.

The goddess only loved humanity for 20,000 years.

* * *

“…”

“…”

Yuki and I calmed our emotions and sat quietly listening to the Divine Maiden’s explanation below the lighthouse.

The Golden Age.

Though it was clearly a story of beautiful humanity playing in an ideal world loved by the goddess, for some reason my heart didn’t race.

‘Isn’t it just that they lived without any purpose, receiving whatever the first goddess gave them?’

For as long as 20,000 years.

And the world where the first humans created by the goddess lived looked like…

“Just from the explanation, the first humans sound… like magical girls.”

Yuki muttered with her eyes swollen from crying.

Yuki still seemed to have negative feelings towards the Divine Maiden, deliberately sitting turned away from her. But the Divine Maiden didn’t notice this intention at all.

“That’s right. Because the first goddess constructed the evolution ritual.”

“Evolution ritual? ＜Magical Girl HAZARD＞?”

“Yes. That name too was decided by the first goddess just before she burned herself.”

“…”

The Divine Maiden remained expressionless even after hearing that I came from a place similar to this world and encountered its future as a story.

“The Golden Age perished before long. The first humans who had lived in order for too long wanted to return to chaos.”

The first humans became tired and despaired after living for 20,000 years.

Eternal joy and pleasure became insensitive, and only emptiness and pain remained.

To end the emptiness, the first humans exploded hundreds of millions of starlights to create their own death. Because if they left scars on the star flowing in perfect circulation, their eternal lives could also end.

Death.

Rejecting the world created by the goddess, the first humans inflicted wounds on the star to create death.

Due to humanity’s will to reject the goddess, the goddess of [Beginning] lost her right to interfere in this world and was banished to another dimension.

From the explosion of enormous starlight, a fragment rose and the second daughter of the world was born.

An age when humans lost their god-like power by consuming all starlight and the concept of death began to dominate. They called the age when they escaped from purposeless empty happiness and created death as their own destination the [Bronze Age].

They called the second daughter of the world born there the goddess of [Death].

There, humans began to fight over resources that were no longer infinite. The fights grew larger and more intense, but through robust bodies with remnants of starlight, they left many legends. The Bronze Age ended and the [Age of Heroes] began, where people started to admire the legends born there more than the fights.

When the age of worshipping and fearing death itself ended, the goddess of [Death] also lost her right to interfere in the world and was banished.

In that place, the third fragment rose and the goddess of [War] was born.

After the Age of Heroes ended, humans with not even remnants of starlight left in their bodies became weak. Humans who could no longer regenerate when limbs were cut off and became vulnerable to disease and poison now began to fear plagues more than war. They focused on making tools and weapons to protect themselves. They called that age the [Iron Age].

When the age of worshipping and being enthusiastic about war itself ended, the goddess of [War] also lost her right to interfere in the world and was banished.

In that place, the fourth fragment rose and the goddess of [Plague] was born.

When humans finally became weak and selfish enough to fear their own greed more than death, war, and plague themselves. The goddess of [Plague] was banished while cursing that human greed would become the most terrible plague.

[Beginning], [Death], [War], [Plague]

After the Golden, Bronze, Hero, and Iron Ages led by the four goddesses passed, the [Age of Greed] began.

The banished goddesses wanted to re-enter the flow of the world, but they could no longer interfere in a world where humans had finally

forgotten the goddesses who had led them.

“That is the current age.”

Yuki and I were momentarily stunned by the story of such a grand scale.

Humans and gods.

In this world, the concept of gods existed in history as multiple personalities and was forgotten.

‘Is that why they hated humanity who forgot them and changed?’

While I was thinking that, Yuki seemed to have the same thought and asked the Divine Maiden.

“Did the goddesses other than [Beginning] try to destroy humanity because they hated humans who banished them?”

“No. The destruction began from the scars on the star left by the first humans.”

The hundreds of millions of starlights that were exploded to deny the world created by the goddess of [Beginning]. That left scars on the star greater than the gods. Human malice and desire over tens of thousands of years seeped into those scars.

The goddesses called it the world’s pus.

The will contained in the star wanted to spit out that pus onto humanity at any time.

It wanted to eliminate all descendants of the first humans who dared to wound the world and fill it with malice. The karma of what the first humans did to deny the world created by the goddess burst out in the distant future.

“Then the demons appearing in <Magical Girl HAZARD> are…?!”

“They are the manifestation of the pus flowing from the star’s wounds to destroy humanity who inflicted those wounds.”

The star's wounds.

Traces of despair committed by humans who lived in the mythical age wishing for their own death. That became karma trying to destroy the current humanity.

"The three goddesses who could not interfere with the dimension due to humanity's will to reject the goddesses wanted the world's pus… the demons to naturally destroy humanity and weaken human will so they could return to the flow of the star."

I recalled Doctor, the magical girl of [Puppet], saying this world would be destroyed anyway.

-Before the gods ruin the human world.

It seemed Doctor also knew that the demons and goddesses were on the same side.

'Did the magical girl of [War] behind the scenes not give proper information?'

With such curiosity, I asked the Divine Maiden.

"Are you saying that humanity was destined to be destroyed by the demons spurting out from the star's wounds even without the goddesses?"

"That's right. The trial was merely a ritual to foretell and prepare for when the demons would emerge from the star's wounds. Even if the goddesses hadn't started the trial, the demons would have appeared."

"If humanity was going to be destroyed anyway, why such a ritual…"

Isn't humanity's destruction what the three goddesses wanted?

"Because the goddess of [Beginning] staked all her fragments to give humanity a chance. So that humans themselves could overcome the world's pus and evolve. Putting forth sloppy rules that seemed like the three goddesses could easily interfere."

Tens of thousands of years after being banished by the first humans.

The goddess of [Beginning], weakened as much as possible, still wanted to give humanity a chance.

Chapter 84 : The Call of the Goddess Religion

At this rate, humanity will be completely destroyed by attacks from demons flowing out of the star's wounds.

Because demons flowing out of wounds made using primordial starlight can only be eliminated with starlight.

The three goddesses except the goddess of [Beginning] will desire humanity's complete destruction to escape this throne and return to the flow of the star.

The goddess of [Beginning] had regretted ever since being banished.

[I'm sorry.]

[I'm sorry I couldn't teach you how to live for tomorrow.]

[I'm sorry I didn't realize until you were so desperate.]

The goddess of [Beginning] became incomparably weak after tens of thousands of years of solitude. She could only use part of her authority by using the fragments of the world remaining in her body.

The goddess of [Beginning] plucked out both her eyes on the throne where she could only observe the world.

Two brilliantly shining red jewels.

She imbued the two jewels with authority that only the goddess of [Beginning] could handle.

In one jewel, she barely managed to contain a small authority to endlessly turn back time, limited to very small scale targets. In the other, she barely managed to contain a small authority to change the

world.

And she hid her heart containing the greatest power in a soul wandering another universe, without the three goddesses knowing.

She hid the jewel containing the power of [Revival] in [Flame], concealing it in the girl with the strongest heart. So that she could convey the contents of the ritual, which the three goddesses would surely distort, to the successor.

She hid the jewel containing the power of [Revelation] in an empty girl born in the land hidden in the sea before the star's wound appeared. So that she could help the successor while being minimally affected by the curses the three goddesses would scatter.

She hid the heart containing the strongest power of [Deception] in a soul from another universe with a fate strongly drawn to this world. Hoping for someone who could love this world despite being unrelated to the star's will.

After completing all preparations, the goddess of [Beginning] rose from her seat.

[…]

The power left to the goddess of [Beginning] was too feeble. This was the limit of what she could prepare while evading the eyes of the other three goddesses. If it wasn't sloppy enough to be easily interfered with, they wouldn't agree in the first place.

She knew the girl bearing [Revival] might face the goddesses' endless malice and despair.

She knew the girl bearing [Revelation] might not understand human hearts and lead the successor astray.

[I'm sorry.]

It was the price for not realizing why humanity despaired in the most brilliant age.

The goddess of [Beginning] declared before the three goddesses with

her already plucked eyes closed:

[I wish to test before the pus flowing from the star's wounds destroys humanity.]

It was a lie.

The goddess of [Beginning] desperately wanted humanity to survive more than anyone.

She wanted to at least create a final refuge for them.

[I tear my body into ten thousand pieces and make the four largest fragments apostles to protect the world where humanity will live.]

[They will watch over humanity's direction from within the hearts of girls bearing the greatest fate, as long as they themselves are not threatened.]

It was a lie.

She had already made [Revelation], the apostle of [Beginning], take root in an empty girl.

She hid [Deception], the successor, in a soul wandering a far universe beyond the reach of the three goddesses' eyes.

So that [Revival]'s power, having witnessed everything, would awaken earlier than this trial the moment it touched the world.

[The final age when humanity will live under the world's pus. I will plant goddess fragments in ten thousand girls with the qualities to lead that age and test them.]

[The girl who overcomes all trials will become the goddess of the next age and lead everyone.]

[We must watch over humanity until the cycle when the star returns to the same position after the trial begins. That is the only rule of this trial.*]*

May the successor meet all arrangements and lead humanity to the

final domain while evading the eyes of the three goddesses.

[The name of this ritual is…]

A name that could connect by fate to a soul wandering a distant universe.

＜**Magical Girl HAZARD**＞

The goddess of [Beginning] did not know what meaning this name had for that soul.

But she only hoped that name could guide the soul.

[I'm sorry.]

Because her own death was the final means to interfere in this world, the goddess of [Beginning] gave humanity one last chance.

[I'm sorry.]

When the goddess of [Beginning] tore her own body into ten thousand pieces, they became ten thousand seeds growing in the hearts of ten thousand girls. So that they could appear as Glass Stars in the trial that would someday begin.

[I'm sorry.]

Only by choosing to disappear herself could the goddess of [Beginning] return to the humanity she loved as seeds of Glass Stars.

The other three goddesses sitting on thrones declared they would agree to and watch over [Beginning]'s incredibly sloppy trial. They too had weakened after being banished from the star for a long time. So they each threw in a curse into the sloppy trial created by the goddess of [Beginning].

[I will test whether girls do not covet each other's power by twisting their fates.]

The goddess of [War] cast a curse of struggle.

They must not perish even if they can steal and use each other's starlight.

[I will test whether girls do not lose their starlight even in trials by twisting their dreams.]

The goddess of [Plague] cast a curse of trials.

They must be able to find their own dreams even if the fates of those with Glass Stars are twisted and filled with sorrow.

[I will test what the world humanity will head towards will be like by twisting the apostles' world.]

The goddess of [Death] cast a curse on the world.

The apostles except [Revelation] will grow within girls bearing the greatest possibility of destruction. Yet they must be able to protect humanity.

A trial begun by one goddess's lie and sacrifice.

A trial overseen by three goddesses' curses and cynicism.

That was the beginning of <Magical Girl HAZARD>.

* * *

"…"

"…"

The story that began in the morning only ended when the sunset began to hang over the horizon beyond the sea. Yuki and I told the Divine Maiden we needed some time to think and came to the edge of the island.

"Hikari."

"Yes?"

"About the story of… me that you said you saw before coming to this world."

“Yes.”

“What kind of story was it?”

A witness who only conveys information to the successor.

A role meaningless even at that if the successor already knows the story of this world.

Yuki, who had been hanging her head and unable to say anything since hearing about the meaning of [Revival] from the Divine Maiden, quietly asked me. Her tone was calm, but undisguisable wretchedness seeped through.

“A wonderful story of a scarred girl believing in hope and moving towards tomorrow.”

“…”

“A story so wonderful and meaningful that I could never forget.”

“I see.”

“Yuki.”

“Yes?”

“Don’t worry too much about goddesses and such. What’s important to me is the current Yuki.”

“…Okay. Thank you.”

I watched the sunset side by side with Yuki for a while.

The evening in the Goddess’s Garden was so quiet that I even had the scary imagination of being left in a destroyed world.

‘The goddess of [Beginning] was once omnipotent but didn’t understand human hearts well.’

She only loved, rather than guiding.

Unable to endure that gap, ancient humans abandoned their divinity

themselves, wounded the star, and became sinners and mortals. The star's wounds became demons threatening humanity over tens of thousands of years.

[I'm sorry.]

The single strand of salvation created by the infinitely weakened goddess of [Beginning] was tainted by the curses of the three goddesses. The arrangement left even while bypassing all those curses was only a feeble refuge.

'I guess the goddess of [Beginning] did her best in her own way. Guiding the first humans to become… magical girls. And preparing detours anticipating interference from the three goddesses.'

What the goddess of [Beginning] didn't anticipate was that I, the successor from another universe, already knew this world's story, bringing about results greater than all those things.

In the end, nothing had changed.

All the things so far were a story begun by my own complete will.

And the things I will do from now on are greater than what the goddess of [Beginning] prepared.

"What are you going to do now, Hikari?"

"Well, I do have some things in mind."

Clink

In my bosom was the silver conch shell handed over by the magical girl of [Revelation].

The key to control the Goddess's Garden.

'I'm not going to hide here and just wait for destruction to pass.'

'If that is the successor's will.'

Having confirmed that the scale of the best ending I envision and the

ending the goddess envisions are different.

I had no intention of unconditionally following her will.

[Revelation] didn't particularly oppose my intention.

"I don't intend to do as the goddess wishes. If everything I've done so far was entirely my own will, then from now on I'll save everyone by my own will too."

I declared proudly, grasping Yuki's hand.

"Because that's the way you taught me. Because magical girls are beings who give hope."

I declared with all my might to Yuki, who had lost her confidence.

"So your journey wasn't meaningless. Even if it wasn't the journey prepared by the goddess, I came this far because I heard your story."

"…Yeah!"

Hearing those words, Yuki finally relaxed her stiff expression and smiled gently as usual.

"By the way, it's a waste."

"Yuki, what do you mean? A waste?"

"To think such land was just a refuge to save only a small number of people… If that's Hikari's intention, we probably won't have any use for this island."

"What do you mean?"

"Hm?"

Yuki turned to look at me, tilting her head. Her hair, slightly damaged at the ends and sticking out, came down with a swish, revealing her white nape.

"A goddess is a goddess, and we should make good use of what's given."

“Make good use…?”

Clink

I playfully shook the silver conch shell in front of Yuki’s eyes as I spoke. The sunset glittering on the silver surface of the conch shell made it feel somewhat mischievous.

“If she said she’d entrust it to me, we should use everything – the goddess’s name, the land. She said there are no returns. And I’m going to work [Revelation] really hard too.”

Because she ignored people in trouble, I wouldn’t be satisfied until I worked her so hard that her expressionless face relaxed. I’ll work her until the Divine Maiden makes a sad face and begs me to stop giving her work.

“What are you planning to do? Can you tell me?”

Yuki looked at me warmly as she said that.

“Well, first…”

Yuki and I talked in a quiet corner of the island until the sunset was completely gone and starlight twinkled.

And we decided to carry out the things we decided that day.

The magical girl of [Revelation] shut herself in the lighthouse and silently began the work I ordered. I aimed to create a space even more wonderful than the Sky Garden by fully opening the Goddess’s Garden to various magical girls.

One week later.

I decided to invite UN ambassadors to the Goddess’s Garden to hold an emergency general assembly.

The proposed agenda was the truth about magical girls and recognition of the establishment of a magical girl autonomous state.

They accepted the proposal.

Chapter 85 : The Successor

February 6, 2012

“Ahahahaha! This is really funny!”

“What? What’s wrong with the tea house I made!”

“It looks like an abandoned house with nothing but green plants everywhere.”

“I think it’s better than your building with mismatched flowers haphazardly woven together.”

“This is what gardening is! This is why country bumpkins from the countryside…”

“Hmph. Once Dad and the uncles bring the tea house equipment from home later, you’ll see what natural beauty is.”

The two girls who had been talking loudly in front of their respective buildings were wearing the same flowy white dresses made of the same white fabric. And they were chattering while their Glass Stars dangling from their waists sparkled.

Today, when diplomats from various countries and invited UN ambassadors were visiting.

Because the founding ceremony was scheduled to be held immediately after the talks ended in the huge hall created by magical girls below the giant lighthouse, all magical girls had been asked by Sumire, the head of the Council, to wear white clothes for the ceremony.

The founding ceremony of the Elysion State, which will become the geographical center for magical girls.

Since a week ago, magical girls had been decorating their own spaces with permission from the magical girl of [Beginning] to freely decorate the island the size of a local city. Magical girls with abilities to distort or create space were going around the island receiving more attention and requests than ever before.

“Amy! Sorry, but can you expand the workshop warehouse a bit? Mom said she’s coming to visit today and the warehouse is too small.”

“Okay! Just wait a moment. And I told you yesterday we should make it bigger already.”

“Hehe, sorry…”

Unlike the Sky Garden, which is a domain completely isolated from normal space, this huge island where sea breezes can be felt.

Directly decorating an island that even ordinary people can enter and leave was so exciting for magical girls that they focused intently, even sleeping in tents for a week.

For the founding day, they were about to burst with anticipation of bringing family and friends they couldn’t bring to the Sky Garden to the opened island and showing off the spaces and abilities they created themselves.

Between the two girls chattering with such anticipation, a hesitant voice was heard.

Flower buds held in both hands.

The flower buds growing on trees that only grow on this island contained clean water.

“Water… I brought some. Please drink.”

“Huh?”

“Oh, oh thank you…”

A voice that sounded alien, unlike the magic of [Unity] used to

communicate with magical girls from other countries or [Cyberbrain]'s communicator. An island resident with sun-like golden hair and eyes.

"…"

"…"

Amy and Lea, who had been chattering with each other, were from Japan and France respectively, so they didn't mind different races. But the girls who had been living as residents of this huge island felt somehow alien.

"Um… do you want to come see the clock workshop I made?"

"Cl…ock?"

"Um… it's a tool that tells time with hands ticking on a circular face."

Although they had heard explanations that the girls living on the island were born and raised only on this island since ancient times and were ancient humans who didn't know death, it was hard to adapt.

'Aren't they just angel-like creatures?'

Lea, from a devout Christian family, thought that the girls living on this island might really be actually existing angels. She guided the girl to show her clock workshop.

"Wow…"

Tick tock tick tock

Lea, who wanted to become a clock artisan following her father who worked in a Swiss clock workshop, continued making various clocks even after awakening her magical girl abilities.

'Mom and Dad just smiled wryly saying the concept was amateurish…'

The sight of hundreds of clocks ticking on neat wooden shelves. It was a sight her friend Amy had seen countless times, but for the golden girl who brought water, it was so amazingly fascinating that she couldn't take her eyes off it.

"Hey, what's your name?"

"…Here they call me the bird living next to the purple flower."

"…"

When she entered the Free Magical Girl Federation as the magical girl of [Wing] under [Revelation]'s orders to test the successor's will, she used the alias Violet. But she wanted to reveal her real name to these two girls who approached her with pure goodwill.

"Hmm… purple. Purple… iris."

"Lea, what on earth are you trying to say?"

Ignoring Amy's comment, Lea pointed at the magical girl of [Wing] and exclaimed.

"Iris!"

"Iris?"

"Iris…?"

And she smiled brightly and took the hand of the girl with golden eyes.

"From now on, I'll call you Iris!"

"Iris…"

"Naming someone else as you please…"

"…I like it."

"Ahahaha! Then shall we go see Amy expanding the warehouse?"

Amy and Lea took Iris's hands on both sides and led her behind the

clock workshop.

‘I wonder what amazing things are in the warehouse?’

Iris, the magical girl of [Wing], had been sealed on this island for tens of thousands of years.

And 17 years ago, she awakened in the light sent down by the goddess of [Beginning] along with the birth of the Divine Maiden, and for the first time other than just blankly spending time on the island or waiting for the Divine Maiden’s orders, she could feel that she was living in this world.

She felt grateful once again to the magical girl of [Deception] who rose up to save these beautiful things that exist outside the island without abandoning them.

* * *

“Well well.”

The agreements with countries belonging or planning to belong to magical girl society, including the UN, had already been concluded long ago. So the emergency general assembly that began just before the founding ceremony was quickly wrapped up.

The magical girl of [Beginning] agrees to create an organization equivalent to a state to clearly control magical girls and not infringe on the interests of other countries.

The US President, who had fled from the Oval Office due to the nuclear war crisis and degenerated into a machine just stamping documents tucked away in a corner, focused on opening diplomatic pipes with the Elysion State rather than persuading each member of the Free Magical Girl Federation individually.

Even those who had tried to plot behind the scenes on the agenda regarding magical girls could only watch silently for now, holding their breath at [Beginning]’s moves.

“I thought she could do anything since she even stopped a nuclear war alone.”

“A flying giant ship and a magical country created by girls.”

Hundreds of foreign reporters who came to record this historic moment couldn’t believe their eyes even as they panned their cameras around.

“The empty island changed like this in just a week?”

A miracle created by thousands of girls chirping like larks with their white dresses and Glass Star belts fluttering.

The somewhat lonely looking island was now bursting with various colors and vitality, enough to be called a magical city without exaggeration.

As if someone had scattered flower seeds in an abandoned arboretum.

The bizarre-looking barren island was gradually changing into a paradise of various colors.

[Woaaah?! Move aside, move aside! It’ll be a big problem if you get crushed, so please move!]

[Oops, excuse me. There’s a lot to move, so please excuse us.]

In the distance, a giant robot and a giant in yellow armor were stomping around carrying things and food needed for the ceremony. And the silver ship hundreds of meters in size floating above was still transporting people through hundreds of silver gliders even after transporting reporters and diplomats.

“There are only girls everywhere.”

As a reporter filming the island with a camera blurted out, the pre-founding state of Elysion looked more like a girls’ school just before a festival rather than a lair of a group with formidable power unafraid of nuclear missiles.

“Haha, actually my daughter is participating in this too.”

“Oh really?”

“When I only saw the news from outside, I thought some national-scale terrorist organization was launching, but it’s just the same as my daughter’s school festival.”

“That’s right.”

Thousands of girls held each other’s hands, smiling and welcoming families who came on the silver giant ship. And the miracle city created by their enormous power shone with all sorts of colors, radiating their dreams.

“It’s like… paradise.”

Click

The reporter muttered while photographing thousands of magical girls gathered in the square created with white stone floors and a huge fountain, now facing the founding ceremony.

[Now we will begin the founding ceremony of the Elysion State.]

The voice of the magical girl of [Beginning] echoing throughout the island.

“Huh? Already? There’s nothing in the square yet.”

“What on earth are they going to show…”

“Are they thinking of doing another debutante or something.”

While muttering, hundreds of reporters simultaneously raised their cameras and started broadcasting live.

Thousands of magical girls who had decorated their white dresses with flowers taken from here and there.

Families and friends invited by magical girls gathered in the square who visited through the Sirius.

Diplomats from various countries and UN ambassadors who gathered in the square after finishing the talks.

People around the world marveled at the sight of paradise seen through the broadcast camera.

They just quietly waited for the magical girl of [Beginning] to appear.

Chapter 86 : The Successor

Whoosh

Silver-white light shot up into the sky from the huge lighthouse visible beyond the square.

“Wow! It’s beautiful!”

The silver-white light fired into the clear sky scattered at the edge of the sky, spreading here and there, large enough to be visible even from space. The tens of thousands of people gathered in the square could be felt marveling at the sight, like a giant silver net spread out on a blue canvas.

“Can we start right away?”

“Of course.”

After hearing the Divine Maiden’s answer as she sat with her eyes closed at the top of the lighthouse, using her power, I focused my consciousness on my avatar in the square.

“Wow, what is that?”

“It’s amazing.”

Today I too was wearing the same white dress as the other magical girls, so no one paid attention to me standing among the thousands of gathered magical girls. They just tilted their heads curiously at the three lights shining from the Glass Star hanging at my waist.

‘That’s right.’

There was no difference between them and me.

I am not special.

I am not a goddess.

I am just like them…

“Hikari-chan!”

“Hello, Hana-chan.”

Sato Hana, who spotted me and came running, had apparently befriended some of the born 1-star girls who were residents of the island, bringing them along in a rush. Sato Hana, who used to be shy, had now become someone who reaches out first to people who can’t get along with others, after helping many people as a magical girl.

“Did your parents come?”

“Yes! We’re all going camping together today!”

“That’s great.”

I patted Hana’s head once and moved forward.

“Leader!”

It was refreshing to see Ichika, who always wore shorts except for her sailor uniform, wearing a skirt. With her performance shown in the friendly match and her achievements in China, Ichika had now become a martial arts magical girl more famous than Yuki, respected by many people.

“What are you going to show now? Huh?”

“Hehe, just wait and see.”

Thump

Ichika just grinned and gave a fist bump without saying much.

“Hikari!”

“Yuki, your dress isn’t much different from your magical girl outfit.”

“Hehe, that’s true.”

"…You're just as cute as in your magical girl outfit."

"The dress suits you too, Hikari!"

"Let's do our best together later."

"Yeah!"

Yuki and I smiled at each other for a moment. Yuki had recovered from the shock of the truth revealed by the Divine Maiden. Not all the wounds deeply engraved in her heart had healed, but at least she didn't lose her bright smile in front of me and cherished her daily life.

"Eunbit unnie!"

"Dorim. You've worked hard."

"Oh, it's nothing."

Since hearing about the star's wounds, Kang Dorim no longer cared much about President Yang, but President Yang seemed to be under strong pressure, going so far as to forcibly separate the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team, including Oh Sanghyuk, into an independent organization. Oh Sanghyuk, who had been subtly trying to be friendly during the earlier meeting, was smiling slyly from afar, taking pictures of Kang Dorim in her dress.

Unaware of this, Kang Dorim and I gave each other an energetic high-five.

Slap!

I moved forward like that, one step at a time.

Step by step.

"Leader! It's disappointing that you haven't been coming to the cafe often lately!"

"Sorry, Kyoko. I've been busy lately. Please continue to take care of Master."

Step by step.

“Wow, [Beginning] you! You were hiding such beauty under your mask? Comparing to me, I’m just barely one step above! Hoho!”

“What are you saying? Don’t talk nonsense. You’ve done quite amazing things, [Beginning]?”

“Li Meilin, Li Na. You’ve worked hard.”

Step by step.

Sumire just smiled and bowed politely, holding the hem of her skirt.

I too bowed politely in return to Sumire, who never shied away from difficult tasks for the sake of magical girls, holding the hem of my skirt.

Step by step.

“This city really suits the name Elysion.”

“Laura. Thank you always.”

Step by step.

“…”

“…”

The crowd, who had been excited by the beautiful silver light adorning the sky and the beautiful scenery of the miracle city, was quietly watching each of my steps.

They were surprised to recognize the faces of celebrities greeting me.

They were astonished as they caught the meaning in the greetings given to me.

When I finally walked to the front of the fountain, they realized my identity.

“Nice to meet you. I am a girl named Shirogane Hikari, or Kang

Eunbit, and…”

For the first time, I greeted them without my mask.

“The successor who leads magical girls with kind lies in a world full of chaos, inheriting the will of one who shared starlight with humanity.”

My heart felt like it would burst as I revealed everything about myself.

I will make sure they no longer mistake each other for enemies and hurt each other.

I will no longer distinguish between each other and pretend not to know.

“And I am the one who became the king of magical girls, who will someday be forgotten, and who created a nation of magical girls to fight against the demons that transcendent beings threatening humanity have neglected…”

“…”

“…”

“…an ordinary magical girl just like all of you.”

“Ordi…nary?”

I heard some girl murmur after hearing my words.

“Just as you are someone’s daughter and friend before being a magical girl, I too am a small human living hoping for the happiness of those I love.”

“Really… are you really human, [Beginning]?”

“I am a human who knows a little more about magical girls than others.”

“What do you mean by kind lies?”

I looked at the silver net that had now completely covered the sky.

I couldn't accept [Revelation], a born 3-star, as my subordinate, but if I combined her inherited power to change the world with my power, there was something I could do.

"…"

The many people watching me.

People seeing Hikari who wants to save this world, not the magical girl of [Beginning].

I was no longer a magician putting on a show asking them to listen to me, but someone who could make them listen to my words. The small step of the shabby girl who first set foot in this world on a rainy summer night was now moving towards a path greater than the goddess's will.

'It's time.'

I had gained a presence large enough to exist wholly by myself, like the silver net completely covering the sky.

I revealed to the crowd staring intently at me after my momentary silence.

"I have been running towards a certain goal while telling lies to you magical girls all this time."

"L-lies?"

"The reason magical girls need to become stronger on their own and receive dreams from people is not just to exist as magical girls."

Then what are magical girls for?

I could feel everyone watching this place asking me that question.

I ran all this way to become someone who could say these words.

"Humanity will face a great threat starting this June. If we don't

overcome it, we will perish.”

“W-wait a moment, then…”

“Demons filled with endless malice towards humanity, which can only be destroyed by starlight, will pour down from the sky, and we will be caught up in the curses of transcendent beings who can disrupt human fate with a single word.”

“…”

“Magical girls were born to prevent this.”

“…”

Looking at the crowd silent with bewilderment at such an absurd statement, I raised my finger to the sky.

“You don’t have to believe it right now.”

“What?”

“I will always be preparing near you.”

Whoosh!

The dazzling rainbow-colored light that climbed up my hand spread into the spatial net that the Divine Maiden had spread in the sky, filling in between the silver frames.

Familiar scenery began to appear among the starlight dazzlingly filling the sky until it was no longer visible.

“Oh?! Isn’t that Beijing? And Shanghai next to it!”

“Huh? Seoul? Busan?”

“Wow! There’s the Eiffel Tower too!!”

“Brussels?”

Kaleidoscope.

The power to change the world and the power to distort the world met, becoming a kaleidoscope reflecting the images of cities where humanity lives.

A miracle that could be created by gathering the three successors left by the goddess.

“The Statue of Liberty? New York?”

“Oh! There’s Taiwan too!”

“Cairo?! Was there a magical girl self-governing body in Egypt?”

“Moscow is there too!”

The screens in the kaleidoscope completely covering the island were divided into thousands and tens of thousands of parts, showing even places not belonging to magical girl society.

Cities of various colors.

Your world and my world.

The living grounds of human life.

The world.

The kaleidoscope endlessly changed above the miraculous paradise created by the girls, showing the appearance of the world where humanity lives. And as silver-white starlight shone, numerous stars rose above the cities in the screens.

“I will stay here in the nation of Elysion and protect humanity from the threat of destruction.”

I carefully put the silver conch shell hanging on my belt to my lips and blew.

———!

Rumble rumble

“Huh?! Is it really moving?!”

“It’s… gradually rising into the sky!”

“This is really amazing!”

The island, which started moving with a slight tremor, moved more quietly than expected. Some reporters, as previously instructed, got on silver gliders to film the rising island.

“We can go anywhere if you request help when attacked by demons.”

Although there was no intense confusion because everyone had been informed in advance that the nation of Elysion was a movable island, the sight of the island slowly rising from the sea visible below the huge kaleidoscope was overwhelming.

“Until that time comes, Elysion will be a playground, training ground, and treasure house for all magical girls.”

By the time the island, which had risen high enough to see Chiba Prefecture’s coast far below, stopped moving.

“It will be an observatory monitoring demons, an ark evacuating people, and a meeting place always open for everyone to gather their strength.”

Everyone turned their eyes from the sea to look at me.

“Elysion does not belong to any country, but will rush to help if any country requests assistance.”

I spoke with the brightest smile I could show them.

“…Just like magical girls.”

Swish

An elderly gentleman watching everything from afar raised his hand, trembling slightly, and asked me a question.

“W-who on earth gave you such power? A-are you perhaps an apostle of God?”

“…”

The goddess of [Beginning].

She was omnipotent enough to be called a goddess, but she didn’t want to be treated like one.

The daughter of the world always played alongside the humanity she loved.

“We became magical girls due to the sacrifice of the first… magical girl.”

I decided to remember her as a magical girl, not a goddess.

“I am the one who inherits the will of the first magical girl who loved people in the distant past and showed them miracles.”

I too will save this world as an ordinary person, not as the goddess’s successor.

“…”

After finishing all my words, I carefully approached them.

The girls wearing the same white clothes as me seemed somewhat scared.

‘I guess it’s hard to break down the sense of rejection even with such a show.’

I was about to smile bitterly.

“Hikari-chan!”

“Hikari!”

“Oh! Leader, you were cool!”

“Unnie, you have a habit of speaking meaningfully, huh?”

“Your Majesty!”

“Hmph, you were a little cool, I guess.”

People who knew me rushed towards me, chattering away.

Seeing this, others also relaxed their stiff expressions and gradually approached me.

“Um… can I call you Miss Shirogane?”

“I made a flower crown, please accept it!”

“Will you make a training ground here too?”

“I-I’ll definitely become strong!”

The magical girls didn’t panic immediately upon hearing about destruction, but just started asking questions they were curious about after hearing my words. And then tens of thousands of people carefully approached and watched us.

Some seriously pondered about the attacks of demons.

Some thought about the benefits they could gain by interacting with Elysion right away.

Some were just excited about the thought of playing with the magical girls they knew.

I smiled, wearing the flower crown someone handed me.

That’s right.

Little by little like this.

As if it were natural.

It was enough to just recognize being beside them without fear.

Because that’s what magical girls are.

“Because magical girls… exist to protect everyone.”

Chapter 87 : Change #9

February 13, 2012

“Cough. Ah… I should have cleaned it properly before using it.”

The tent I had bought with money earned from part-time jobs at the cafe and other odd jobs for preparing for the apocalypse was full of dust. In the end, now that I had fully declared to prevent destruction, the apocalypse supplies I had buried in various places around Japan became my living necessities in Elysion.

Rustle rustle

I wriggled out of my sleeping bag, then quickly took off my pajamas. I fumbled to put on the underwear I had carelessly taken off earlier, then put on the Elysion resident fashion—a white dress reaching the knees—made by the magical girl of [Sewing] and fastened the belt. Now I looked presentable enough to go outside without embarrassment.

When I put on the dress and roughly tightened the belt, it pulled tight due to my chest, making a strange A-frame tent-like shape. So before tightening the belt, I had to gently pat under my chest to leave enough room, then put it on to make it look proper.

“Hmm. That looks about right.”

The design of this white dress, said to be from the era when the goddess of [Beginning] existed, was simple but softer and more comfortable than any material. So the magical girls staying in Elysion asked for clothes from the blonde girl quietly making clothes in the village below the lighthouse, giving her the name ‘Penelope’.

-I like the name… Please let me know anytime you need clothes.

Penelope said she was a girl who made clothes even before being sealed on this island, before becoming a magical girl. The magical girls who received her clothes as gifts would give her candies or decorations that could only be seen outside the island, or show her videos of movies and performances.

With that pleasant feeling, I crawled on my knees to the tent entrance and opened the semicircular entrance zipper. The refreshing sea breeze blowing from far away greeted me under the cloudless sky.

“Miss Shirogane!”

The girls of the Free Magical Girl Federation, knowing that I set up camp near the training ground, had been sparring in the training ground since dawn, waiting for me to wake up.

“Oh? It’s Miss Shirogane!”

“Good morning!”

“Waaah! Your Majesty! You’re awake!”

“Your Majesty! Today too, we’ve been dedicating ourselves to training to become more excellent magical girls!”

“Miss Lihua, don’t you get tired doing that every day? It hasn’t been long since you came back from home.”

Chen Lihua wrapped her whole body in lightning and quickly went back and forth in just two hours when Elysion, floating over the sea, approached near Taiwan. I was worried that her family might have been harmed, but nothing happened, so I was relieved.

As soon as Chen Lihua returned to her home located in northern Taiwan, she immediately declared:

-I’m going to become a magical girl who can protect people in Elysion!

-Okay, take care.

Chen Lihua’s mother, who carelessly packed her lunchbox and clothes, just patted her back and smiled, she said. Thus, the reunion

between the daughter who declared she would move to the sky island after finishing her 4-month stay in America and her mother ended in an hour.

“Even if she acts like that on the outside, she must be worried inside, so please use the warp gate to visit sometimes.”

“My mom is a strong person.”

Chen Lihua proudly smiled, her white coat fluttering.

“It’s my mom who told me to become a person who does right and just things, so she’s supporting me.”

“…Still, there’s still time before the fight with demons, so please cherish your family.”

“Yes! Of course!”

She smiled like a bright flash of light in the dark sky.

“Then I’ll be going for the next training! The breakfast is delicious, so make sure to eat it!”

“…”

Including Chen Lihua, there were not a few magical girls who had completely moved into Elysion with conviction. And hundreds of magical girls with complicated family situations or nowhere to rely on decided to live going back and forth between Elysion and the Sky Garden.

‘I was really surprised that the entire Free Magical Girl Federation decided to stay in Elysion.’

The United States finally gave up completely on persuading the Free Magical Girl Federation and agreed to allow the installation of warp gates connected to Elysion and unlimited entry of the Sirius.

The Russian President eventually resigned. And the new Minister of Defense, who was appointed as the head of the interim government to replace him, also allowed the installation of warp gates and entry

of the Sirius. They also agreed to put all state-recognized magical girls of Russia under the protection of [Beginning].

The announcement of the demon invasion spread rather quietly as rumors, and most countries just focused on interacting with the magical girl city.

‘I’m thinking of squeezing the Divine Maiden soon to declare domains in parts of the United States and Russia.’

As payment for executing the observation magic that shows real-time views of the whole world like a kaleidoscope, the Divine Maiden was bedridden for a while with her starlight depleted. Although she was a born 3-star, she was a nominal apostle that the goddess of [Beginning] only made appear outwardly for deception. So the total amount of starlight she could use was relatively small compared to her combat ability and the size of her authority.

‘If we fight for 5 minutes, she’d be one step below me in an intense battle, and anything beyond that would be her certain defeat.’

This was the result of my assessment after analyzing her for days using cause and effect reversal.

Due to Ichika’s full blooming, which made the Kansai region of Japan her jurisdiction, the domain of [Deception] that gained some leeway now included Shanghai.

Now, if we protect the east and west coasts of the United States and Moscow with domains, it would mean forward bases would be established in all locations where trial demons appear. So I was planning to send the Divine Maiden to the United States and Russia to declare domains as soon as she recovered, and the Divine Maiden silently agreed to my thoughts without saying anything.

-It’s a bit… hard to face the magical girl of Revelation. I’m sorry.

Yuki felt uncomfortable even talking with Sumire, who had a similarly bad image, but after conversing a few times, she was fine with her because she knew Sumire had completely left Fujimoto of her own will to protect magical girls.

But she still openly showed her aversion to the Divine Maiden and found it difficult to even face her. I guess it's hard to compare the Divine Maiden, who fully retains the memories of ignoring people, with Sumire, who changed due to my choice, on the same level.

Ding

Just as I was thinking about Yuki, a message from her arrived on my phone.

'Actually, Yuki is the only one who sends messages every day.'

[I submitted an application to a public high school near home… Is it okay to do this when destruction might be approaching?]

Numerous telecommunications companies had rushed to offer to install satellite internet networks in Elysion for free, so we collaborated with the most suitable company among them, and wireless internet was now available in Elysion. They asked us to emphasize that it was their company's internet installed in the magical girls' city, so we put up a signboard with the company logo in the square.

Tap tap

[I'm here to prevent that. I'd like Yuki to cherish her daily life.]

Send.

The read mark appeared instantly, and a photo was uploaded.

A photo of a teenage model posing in a girl's school uniform.

[It's the uniform of the school I'm applying to, do you think it would suit me?]

[Yuki is cute, so anything would suit you.]

Send.

By the way, I was looking forward to what breakfast menu Chen Lihua, who is quite picky about food, had highly praised. I listened to

Yuki's worries adequately while walking towards the free restaurant next to the square.

[…It feels like you're just responding casually while on your way to eat.]

Sharp one.

[No, I really am looking forward to it. Will you show me wearing it sometime?]

[I haven't even taken the entrance exam yet?]

Sometimes when Yuki hears an answer she doesn't like, she persistently clings to it.

How could I possibly know about the Japanese high school admission system?

But I couldn't accept giving such a sharp answer to Yuki myself, so I tried to say it as indirectly as possible.

[I'll definitely come to cheer for you on the day of the exam.]

Send.

The sign at the restaurant I arrived at said that a magical girl from Italy was today's chef in charge.

"Give me another cornetto!"

"One shakerato, please!"

"I'll give you the decorations I made later, so please give me some more sandwiches~"

The huge restaurant was filled with the bustling sounds of hundreds of magical girls getting breakfast.

'Everyone's so energetic from the morning.'

Looking at the menu, it was a sweet menu with chewy cornetto-like pastries, sweet rusks, sandwiches with various ingredients, and drinks

with plenty of cream and syrup poured over espresso.

On days when a magical girl with cooking-related abilities was in charge of the menu, such luxurious menus were served.

“There’s a coffee machine too. Should I ask for an Americano?”

Since today’s chef is Italian, they’ll surely make delicious coffee.

I swallowed my drooling saliva.

Ding

[…Do you really have to come?]

[I’ll definitely come.]

I gave a confident answer to Yuki, who still seemed to lack confidence, and entered the restaurant to have breakfast. And as soon as I entered, I spent 15 minutes calming down the magical girls who greeted me loudly. Meanwhile, it seemed I received some inquiry from Sumire, but it was a request for permission to produce and sell merchandise modeled after my appearance, so I just told her to do as she pleased.

‘It’s not business ethics for otakus who know everything to play hard to get with each other.’

Chapter 88 : Change #10

Hong Nayeon, an unbloomed born 2-star magical girl from Busan with a distinctive two-tone blue short haircut, thought the events of the past month were like a dream.

The revelation of Natalia, the magical girl of [Navigation], who came through the cold winter sea.

Russia's nuclear attack, dominated by the magical girl of [Puppet].

The magical girl of [Sword] who struck Beijing.

The nuclear war crisis between the United States and Russia.

The founding of the magical girl city-state.

Events that would have turned the world upside down even if just one had been witnessed occurred in succession. People were constantly fixated on news channels on their phones, wondering what would happen next. But among all these, what surprised Hong Nayeon the most was her reunion with her parents who had gone missing at sea two years ago.

"Nayeon!! Dad's here!!"

"Oh my, I've been so worried sick about our daughter!"

"D-Dad? Mom? Where on earth…?"

Her parents were found in the village below the lighthouse of Elysion, where the magical girls' city is currently built. More precisely, Nayeon's parents, who had an accident nearby during the island's movement cycle two years ago, were miraculously rescued by the girls living on the island. Due to the Divine Maiden's strict rule that the island must not be discovered until the successor was

qualified, they had been living with the girls.

“Our daughter must have gone through a lot.”

“We’re just grateful you survived well without Mom and Dad.”

As soon as Nayeon confirmed her parents’ survival, she cried her heart out and wailed like a child, pouring out all the hardships she had endured. Seeing this, Nayeon’s parents also hugged their daughter and cried loudly.

After hours of just pouring out emotions, Nayeon suddenly noticed her father’s hair.

“Dad, your hair has… grown?”

“Huh? Oh, yeah. It seems so.”

Surprisingly, her father’s hair, which had been so bald from working in fishing under the hot sun and the curse of genetics that he was teased as ‘Mr. Lightbulb,’ maintained the lush appearance Nayeon had only seen in her kindergarten days.

“Mom, your skin has… improved too?”

“Is that so? Maybe it’s because I’ve been eating only good things the kids there provided.”

Her mother’s appearance, which had once carried the weight of life closer to a grandmother than a middle-aged woman, had also returned to the imposing figure Nayeon had seen when she was very young. Above all, as her bent back straightened, the image of Mrs. Kim from Nampo-dong, who once ruled Busan in her heyday, reappeared.

“…”

Feeling a sense of discomfort, Nayeon let go of her parents she was hugging, took a step back, and slowly observed them.

Her parents’ hair, wearing white clothes with ample room like visiting a traditional European folk village, was still jet black without

a single gray hair. And the age spots and wrinkles that had spread on their faces had almost disappeared, making them look like the parents Nayeon had seen when she was very young.

“Are you really… not joking? Did you get hair dye or skin care there?”

“The kids living on the island… a girl called ‘small bird living next to the purple flower’ took care of us, and we spent time eating strange fruits and water she provided while walking around.”

“We didn’t know well because there were no mirrors, but has Mom really become that young? It’s hard to tell when we look at each other with our eyes.”

Nayeon took a picture of her parents with trembling hands and showed it to them.

An appearance as young as when they had just finished their belated honeymoon and Nayeon was born.

Nayeon’s parents screamed in surprise when they confirmed their appearance. Then they screamed a second time when they went to the hospital and confirmed their documents declaring them missing and presumed dead. Finally, they screamed a third time when they received a health check-up and confirmed their physical condition had become 20 years younger.

After a dazed day due to the shock, Nayeon’s family began to regain their daily life with vigorous laughter. Although they had lost all their assets to maintain fishing due to the looting of those they once trusted, they were hopeful because they had been compensated with youth 10 times more valuable than the lost 2 years.

“By the way, have you become one of those magical girls or whatever?”

“Huh? Oh, yeah.”

“I’ve been watching the news lately, and it seems those White Wing kids are well-treated and help a lot of people.”

“I’m not like them.”

“Why? Some of the kids on that island where Dad was also became magical girls or something a few months ago, and they were running around using strange powers. Wouldn’t it be good to help people with that?”

“I just like staying at home.”

“I’m grateful you kept the house for us while Dad and Mom were gone, but Dad would like Nayeon to find what she wants to do now.”

Hearing her father’s words as he was browsing the internet to look for other jobs, Nayeon, sprawled out in the living room, suddenly recalled a certain silver-haired, narrow-eyed woman.

‘Come to think of it, she was [Beginning], wasn’t she.’

Because she had been harassed for 2 years by groups trying to loot the family’s assets in the absence of her parents, she had coldly driven them away. But that woman’s words were upright, unlike others.

“…”

Wouldn’t they think it’s shameless if I ask to join now?

“Who cares. I just need to live well myself.”

Bang!

“Oh, you startled me!”

Mrs. Kim, who had slapped Nayeon’s bottom as she was lying upside down on the sofa pondering, shouted in the boisterous voice she had prided herself on as the righteous person of Nampo-dong in her youth.

“You little brat! Dropping out of school while Mom and Dad were gone! Doing that weird hair dye! Wearing such short skirts! Huh? Kids your age are saying they’ll go to that strange island to help others when they become magical girls!”

“Wh-why suddenly bring that up! I’ll dress how I want, so leave me alone…”

“If you want to do it, go help people right now! Don’t worry, Mom and Dad have become younger, so we can make a living no matter what we do now!”

“That’s right, it seems Nayeon has received some kind of opportunity, so go learn various things.”

Her parents, who had received help from the golden magical girls living on the island, expressed their wish for their daughter to do something as a magical girl. Nayeon, unable to resist their persuasion, surrendered herself to the bus heading to the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Headquarters.

“Oh, a new recruit?”

“…”

“New recruit? Did you say new recruit?”

“She’s an enlistment hopeful! Still a trainee!”

Trainee.

New recruit.

Magical girl.

Enlistment hopeful.

The White Wing Unit members gathered at the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Headquarters dormitory to plan training schedules were all wearing short-sleeved T-shirts and casual pants distributed by the military. Among them, Hong Nayeon with her short skirt and blue two-tone short haircut stood out conspicuously.

“It’s a new recruit…!”

The 60 White Wing Unit members in the dormitory licked their lips with gleaming eyes.

The sweet smell of a new recruit.

“It’s an enlistment hopeful! Our workforce is increasing!”

The sincere spirit of these victors of ground warfare through practical training was enough to make Hong Nayeon, an unbloomed born 2-star magical girl, tremble.

“Um… I want to go to the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team, not White Wing…”

Click

The sound of the door locking.

When Hong Nayeon turned around, Lee Min-seul, the magical girl of [Shooting] and leader of White Wing 1st Platoon, was grinning, her body covered in tactical equipment and wearing a school uniform-style skirt reminiscent of military uniform patterns.

Nayeon got goosebumps because her short bob haircut looked so much like a soldier’s.

“Welcome to White Wing 1st Platoon, new recruit.”

“…Can’t I leave?”

That day, the third born 2-star magical girl in South Korea joined a state-recognized autonomous organization.

Her alias that bloomed during her new recruit training period was the magical girl of [Sea].

* * *

If someone were to open a Japanese magical girl-related community site, they should not go too deep.

-Magical girl topic related search terms-

[Shirogane Hikari]

[Magical girl of Beginning Hikari]

[Magical girl queen Hikari]

[Magical girl of Beginning Zainichi Korean]

[Shirogane Hikari sexy]

[Shirogane Hikari breasts]

[Hikari-chan breasts]

[Hikari in dress]

[Hikari cafe part-time job photos]

There, only those who cried out about breasts in what was no longer human language existed.

There, they were praising one person's appearance in words that could no longer be expressed in human vocabulary.

A world full of only chaos.

In that world, the only one speaking human words appeared.

[Planning to produce 1/1 size silicone doll of magical girl of Beginning Shirogane Hikari]

※

Greetings.

This is Horse Mask.

We have successfully obtained consent for portrait rights from Shirogane Hikari, the magical girl of [Beginning], through the Council.

We plan to custom-produce a silicone doll of the same size as the real person within the first half of this year, so please carefully check the reservation schedule.

As this is a product modeled after a real person, we will strictly review documents and proceed with orders, so please understand.

Also, this product is merely a figurine of a fictional character modeled after a real person.

It has no causal relationship with the personality or thoughts of the real person.

We will firmly respond legally at the company level to indiscriminate criticism and mockery towards Shirogane Hikari, who graciously allowed the production.

Once again, we express our gratitude to Shirogane Hikari for granting permission for portrait rights.

Horse Mask.

※

Let there be light here.

The savior wearing a horse mask descended, and those who had been crying out about breasts while lost ran towards the hill of salvation.

That day, the server of the silicone doll manufacturing company's website went down.

Chapter 89 : In the Dream Where the Flower of the Other Shore Blooms

February 27, 2012

“So, for now, we’ve installed warp gates in temporary offices set up in Los Angeles and Washington. We’ve reached an agreement to allow magical girls to freely come and go in these two cities.”

Rustle

Kang Dorim turned to the next page of the stack of documents. The chair in the Grand Council meeting room at the Elysion Central Hall was too high for her, so she kept swinging her feet throughout the meeting.

“…And we’ve completed modifications to reduce the size of the high-speed transport ship Pollux so that even magical girls with ordinary piloting abilities can sufficiently operate it.”

The high-speed transport ship Pollux, built following the enormous Sirius, was on standby at the top of the Elysion lighthouse.

“We had to make a lot of noise to finish quickly because there’s a lot to create these days and a lot to monitor on the internet. But I told Iris to have the people in the village below the lighthouse evacuate temporarily, so it should be fine.”

“Since it’s smaller than the Sirius, maintenance finished quickly. It seems like a really practical and good airship!”

Natalia, the magical girl of [Navigation], smiled broadly as she listed the advantages of the Pollux. She also mentioned that if there was

anything else she wanted to modify, she planned to do additional maintenance later.

I couldn't help but chuckle a bit seeing this.

The Divine Maiden, who had been going back and forth between the US and Russia declaring domains for the past two weeks, was lying sick inside the lighthouse. Because of this, she had been hearing the construction noise of the Pollux in real-time, and it seemed she would have to suffer for a few more days.

"That's all I have to report."

Kang Dorim put down the documents with a thud, signaling to me that she had finished everything she had to report.

"Okay. You've worked hard. You must be busy these days because of the warp gates."

"Actually, the warp gates are not that difficult because it's just about making the door frame and [Transfer] casting magic on it."

"Still, you do have a lot to do. It's probably the same for everyone here."

"Huh? I don't have much to do though?"

Ichika, who had fully bloomed powerful combat abilities, was assigned to defense, going back and forth between China and Japan in preparation for any contingencies. In other words, if nothing happened, she was the most leisurely person among us.

"Because Ichika is here, we can work with peace of mind."

"Heng. You don't need to flatter me like that."

"Anyway, does anyone else have anything left to report?"

I slowly looked around at the Grand Council members in the meeting room, as well as Chen Lihua, Iris, and Natalia.

'Huh? Why is she acting like that again?'

Sumire was fidgeting with an expression of utter embarrassment.

“Fujimoto-san. Do you have something to say…?”

“Well… it’s about the merchandise… sales that you previously approved.”

Ah.

That Horse Mask bastard.

He used unnecessarily fancy words, so I couldn’t imagine what they were making.

When I first saw that proposal, I coolly approved it because I imagined things like figurines or bromides. But most of the items created due to that approval were products with somewhat intense desires.

‘I thought all that talk about breasts was just a joke, but they were serious.’

The 1/1 size real doll boasted a level of detail that was truly alarming. I felt uneasy for a while after seeing that, but soon gave up.

“Well, what can we do about something I’ve already approved?”

“…But I didn’t know such suggestive items would be made. I’m truly ashamed.”

Sumire muttered about legal responses with a genuinely disgusted expression. And everyone gathered here made uncomfortable expressions and glanced at me regarding this topic.

‘Come to think of it, they’re all still kids.’

They were all able to develop independence because they could handle the power of fate and starlight, but their sensibilities were close to those of ordinary schoolgirls. That’s why they showed somewhat sharp reactions to these kinds of things, even if it wasn’t about themselves.

‘I don’t mind what they do where I can’t see, but I’ll punish them if they say it directly in front of me.’

From my perspective, having lived a total of 30 years as both a man and a woman, others’ sexual desires were perplexing but not something to feel disgust about, so I didn’t want to make a bigger issue out of it.

“I particularly don’t mind, so please don’t feel too burdened.”

“…Yes. We’ll make sure this doesn’t happen again.”

Even though I said it was okay, I decided to end the morning meeting time after asking Horse Mask one additional request towards Sumire, who was still feeling down.

As Sumire walked towards the Japanese warp gate, Ichika put her arm around her shoulder, her silver light armor fluttering, saying, ‘I get hungry whenever I see the name Fujimoto, let’s go buy some sushi.’ Sumire nodded slightly with somewhat scared eyes.

I felt dumbfounded seeing this, but soon sighed, thinking of that Horse Mask guy.

The message I conveyed to Horse Mask was…

[I’m fine with it, but don’t mess with the other magical girls.]

Because I was just unusual, while most other magical girls had delicate sensibilities appropriate for their age. So I prohibited them from pushing such contracts on other magical girls.

It was pathetic that such ridiculous incidents were occurring when the invasion of demons was right around the corner.

‘What can we do? That’s just how people live.’

Even at a funeral, people cry their hearts out over the death of a family member, but then hurriedly eat to survive. And they go out to smoke a cigarette at the hospital they visited to survive, dragging their sick bodies.

Isn't that how everyone lives?

Thinking this, as I left the meeting room and walked across the square, magical girls organizing food supplies in front of the warehouse greeted me.

"Hello! Your Majesty!"

"Hello. And please just call me by my name."

"Yes! Understood! Your Majesty!"

"…"

"Um… I'm sorry, but could you move up the food supply schedule for next week a little?"

"What? Has it already run out?"

"Yes… it seems the population of Elysion Island is rapidly increasing due to magical girls who decided to live with their families."

In Elysion, basic necessities could be solved with magic, so the number of people choosing to move boldly was rapidly increasing.

'Although the population of just over two thousand is still small compared to the size of the island.'

I quietly picked up the Glass Star hanging on my belt and thought of the store window.

Magical

Merchandise

Letters floated above my Glass Star as starlight was consumed.

"How much do you need?"

"Well… we're short on flour, meat, and salt."

Flour.

Meat.

Salt.

Just as much as possible.

As I thought about what was needed, starlight was instantly consumed. An amount of starlight that would be difficult for even other 2-star or fully bloomed magical girls to handle fell away.

Rumble rumble

A mountain of food supplies appeared in the square with an enormous sound.

“Wow! Woooow!”

“Amazing!”

Sacks of salt and flour were piled up like small fortresses, and fresh meat was displayed as if an entire butcher shop had been emptied.

“Waaah?! It really came out like a mountain?!”

“Is this enough?”

“Yes! This is enough to eat for a week!”

“Please call me anytime if you need more.”

“Thank you! Your Majesty!”

I walked away, leaving behind the magical girls chattering while looking at the food supplies piled up in the square.

“…”

Even a born 3-star should have struggled with starlight depletion for a while after creating food for thousands of people to eat. But my Glass Star had long since refilled the depleted parts.

‘It’s like having a fast charger plugged into a phone.’

Since revealing my face, name, and true purpose, and truly stepping forward in front of many people, the speed at which starlight charged had become unbelievably fast.

-It's probably because the successor has the most similar attributes to the goddess.

-The goddess's attributes?

-Leading humanity, relieving ignorance, and becoming an idol.

-…

The Divine Maiden said this was because I had started walking the fate closest to the goddess. As she said, my Glass Star had been growing and evolving with increasing power since I stepped onto the true path of salvation.

'Maybe this is also a kind of deception.'

That the one closest to being a goddess considers herself human.

* * *

In an old hospital in Moscow, which was included in the domain by the Divine Maiden, active volunteer work by magical girls had been taking place recently.

Cho Yeonseo, the magical girl of [Dream], looked at the small girl sleeping in front of her with a pitiful expression.

"She's been… sleeping continuously since birth?"

"This case is rare, so the child's parents went around looking for a solution…"

The doctor shook his head as he spoke.

"…In the end, they went missing nearby while going to meet a doctor in a European hospital who had handled a similar patient."

"So this child has been sleeping her entire life without family."

Cho Yeonseo's purple eyes were filled with sadness.

When she had collapsed in sorrow over her parents' death, her maternal grandfather was by her side. But this child had never seen anyone since birth.

A life of endless sleep.

Can that be called life?

A life born from nothingness, living in nothingness, and returning to nothingness was no different from death.

Cho Yeonseo spoke, firmly resolving to save her.

"I'm a magical girl, so I can enter Alisa's consciousness."

"But this child hasn't received any stimulation since birth. She has no self, no dreams."

"We won't know until we see for ourselves."

All dreams are infinite.

Cho Yeonseo, who had glimpsed the vast dream world spread beneath the curtain of consciousness, thought this child might be trapped in her own world.

"I'll look into her dream and try to find clues."

"…Alright."

The doctor left the room with an expression that said he couldn't stop her.

After the sound of the hospital room door closing, only the sound of Alisa's breathing, deep in sleep, could be heard in the shabby room where cold winter wind leaked in.

"…"

Hoping that this child could come out of the dream world and walk with her in a bright world.

Cho Yeonseo prayed like that.

Chapter 90 : In the Dream Where the Flower of the Other Shore Blooms

Alisa, who had been sleeping with her black hair covering her face inside a teapot, suddenly opened her eyes at a loud noise. She opened the lid and looked around to check if something strange had happened, but everything around her was as usual.

Silence.

“…”

Alisa looked at the sky. Above the yellow sky, a giant egg laid by a chicken had cracked, and the sun flowed out, ripening towards evening. On the trees, clocks were fluttering in the refreshing swamp breeze.

Tick tock

The clocks that couldn’t make a sound because they were wet from the damp swamp.

Someone had dried them well, and they were now making sounds.

“…”

It seemed someone had already done the errand of hanging up the clocks that Alisa couldn’t do.

“…”

Alisa couldn’t do the White Rabbit’s errand because she was sleeping, but she guessed that the Brown Cat or the Mad Hatter must have

taken care of it.

‘Maybe the pigeon did it.’

Alisa looked at the messy tea party table in front of her, then went back into the teapot to sleep again. She needed to sleep deeply because once the tea party started, she wouldn’t be able to sleep again.

In the quiet darkness.

Alisa sank her consciousness into the space of nothingness that was all too familiar to her.

Just quietly staying still.

That was what she thought life looked like.

* * *

March 5th

“The magical girl of [Dream]?”

“Yes… Asya stayed behind at a hospital she visited recently, saying she would cure a long-term patient. It seems she’s been going to that hospital every day, trying to approach the dream world.”

Natalia, who had quickly become close to Cho Yeonseo due to their compatible personalities, reported to me with a worried face.

Natalia, Chen Lihua, Cho Yeonseo.

The three who shared most of the narrative in <Magical Girl HAZARD>, enough to be called the protagonist party. They quickly became close after encountering each other a few times while going back and forth to Elysion, even in this changed history.

‘They all had their own sense of justice enough to unite even in an apocalyptic situation. Maybe their personalities match even better when they meet in normal times.’

As the work progressed past the middle, they all died one by one starting with Chen Lihua.

"…"

Yuki still avoided meeting them. Even though it was already a changed world, their faces were too familiar, making it harder for her to see them.

'If she just sincerely faced those girls, it might be resolved unexpectedly quickly.'

I was in no position to ask them to be friendly with Yuki, so I just watched.

-I passed the entrance exam! I'm so nervous about entering high school! What should I do, Hikari?

I had asked Yuki to go her own way, hoping to give her even a little bit of daily life after being dragged into the extraordinary due to destruction. Yuki said her relationship with her father was gradually improving.

'I just need to keep going my own way too.'

Natalia, who came to Elysion as the transport manager.

Chen Lihua, dedicating herself to training as the leader of the Free Magical Girl Federation.

Cho Yeonseo, active in the Russian domain included by the Divine Maiden.

And even Hong Nayeon, who unexpectedly enlisted as a new recruit in the White Wing Unit…

I shuddered when I confirmed the names of the righteous characters from the original work who naturally joined the magical girl society in the process of saving people and establishing Elysion.

'Is this the great path that encompasses everything, as Father said?'

So I was closely watching their movements, and it seemed Cho Yeonseo had some concerns.

“Could you tell me the address of that hospital?”

“Oh, are you going to visit in person, Your Majesty?”

“Yes. I can return to Elysion or the Garden anytime. I’ll leave a clone behind too.”

“I’ll tell you right away. No! I’ll write it down for you!”

I checked the address Natalia hastily wrote down on paper she pulled from her bosom and went to Moscow through the warp gate located in Elysion. Perhaps because I had moved Elysion close to the US West Coast for magical girls’ transportation issues, Moscow’s biting wind felt even more noticeable.

‘I’m glad I wore the thick outer coat I brought just in case.’

As I came out of the Grand Council office located in Moscow, I saw people glancing at me, recognizing my face.

“Huh? Isn’t that the magical girl of [Beginning]?”

“What? Hmm… I can’t see well because I drank too much vodka… Which woman are you talking about, the one standing on the right or left?”

“Get a grip! There’s only one woman there. Why are you so drunk? You only drank three bottles.”

I slightly covered my face by raising the collar of my coat and walked briskly to the hospital Cho Yeonseo was said to be visiting.

And after walking for tens of minutes.

The state of the hospital I arrived at and checked was terrible.

Rusty and twisted metal structures everywhere.

Cement visible through completely peeled paint.

An old man drinking vodka while sitting outside in hospital clothes.

“…”

In the miserable state of the hospital that was depressing just to look at, people who were clearly not normal were wandering around in shabby hospital gowns.

“What am I supposed to do now… I can’t remember.”

“It’s all over…”

Although there were no people with noticeable external injuries thanks to the healing volunteer work of magical girls, most looked like people abandoned under the pretext of illness.

People who had mental illnesses too, banging their heads against walls.

People trying to stay in the hospital by self-harming with miserable feelings after being abandoned by their families.

Dementia patients that no one wants to care for.

Emptiness.

This old hospital was full of only emptiness.

Even the doctors and nurses were ignoring patients holding bottles of alcohol while wearing shabby hospital gowns. They too were just pretending to work on the surface, but they equally considered this place the final destination of their lives.

I passed by them and entered the room on the top floor. No one stopped me even though I was heading to the room without saying anything.

Knock knock

When I knocked on the door, Cho Yeonseo with her striking purple eyes and hair came out from inside the room. She looked at me with wide, surprised eyes.

“Huh?! The magical girl of [Beginning]?”

“Hello, Asya.”

“You’re calling me by that nickname. Did Lihua or Natasha tell you?… Oh, what brings you here?”

“Natalia-san said it seemed like Asya had some concerns.”

I could see a black-haired girl sleeping beyond Cho Yeonseo. So I carefully closed the door, but an unpleasant noise came from the heavily rusted hinges.

I was startled for a moment and looked back at the sleeping black-haired girl.

“Ugh…?!”

“She doesn’t wake up from that level of noise.”

As I looked around the room listening to Cho Yeonseo’s bitter smile, the inside of the shabby hospital room was in a terrible state, just like the outside of the hospital.

Walls covered in mold.

Curtains that had turned yellow, fluttering in the wind.

Cheap beds that were rusty and damp all over.

“Even when I close the windows, the cold wind comes in just the same.”

“…Alisa has been sleeping alone in a place like this her entire life.”

“Her entire life…?”

Cho Yeonseo explained the whole story to me in a gentle voice.

“I see. A dream so vast that even the power of the magical girl of [Dream] can’t grasp it.”

“Usually, no matter how wide the unconscious space is, it

immediately leads to the conscious space. But this child only had an endless unconscious space spread out."

"…"

What kind of dream would a person who hasn't learned anything or felt any emotions since birth have?

"I… maybe because I've spent time sleeping due to narcolepsy, this child's life doesn't feel like someone else's story."

Yeonseo said as she stroked the sleeping Alisa's face. I heard Alisa had turned 17 this year, but she looked like a middle school student or upper elementary school student on the outside.

"If Alisa wants to reclaim the life she lost to sleep in her dream, I want to help her."

She said that's why she had put lots of [Dream] magical girl magic on her grandfather's house in Yekaterinburg and stayed in Moscow for several days.

"…"

For me, it might be more beneficial to ignore this matter and return to maintain Elysion or spend the remaining time making memories with friends including Yuki.

But…

-Because magical girls are here to protect everyone!

I can't run away pretending not to know after saying such things.

There was also a calculation that I could solve Cho Yeonseo's concerns and make her a new precious connection for the hesitating Yuki.

"I'll enter the dream world together with you."

"What?! Really?"

“If Asya’s dream and my fantasy combine, we might be able to show something wonderful enough to draw out Alisa’s faint consciousness.”

Cho Yeonseo grabbed my hands with tears in her eyes and bowed her head.

“Thank you… really. Actually, I felt uneasy thinking I was just being stubborn alone.”

“At times like that, you can just raise your head proudly and say it’s a magical girl’s conviction.”

Pfft

Cho Yeonseo showed a small smile for the first time at my brazen words. Then she poured purple starlight onto me as I settled in. The powerful starlight within me automatically reflected them, but I deliberately tried to accept them.

Eyes slowly closed.

A comfortable feeling.

Darkness.

Cho Yeonseo and I entered the dream of the girl named Alisa.

And what we saw there was…

“…”

“…”

“Why is there a river in the dream? Is it like this for everyone?”

“This is my first time seeing this too… Usually, even in the unconscious, familiar spaces appear first. Even if natural scenery appears, people are ultimately in places where people live.”

Cold, damp, and heavy air.

There was an endlessly flowing river under a darkening sky.

Cho Yeonseo pointed across the faintly glowing river and said.

“I can feel a very faint consciousness over there.”

“Let’s try crossing over.”

Cho Yeonseo was flustered at those words.

“I couldn’t cross over with magical girl powers here.”

“What?”

“If I try to cross through the air, I return to the starting point.”

“Then how…”

“Instead, there is one way…”

Cho Yeonseo looked somewhere, and I looked there too.

There was a skeleton drinking alcohol in a Russian squat position in front of a shabby raft.

“…”

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"…"

I was momentarily dazed as I looked at the skeleton sitting awkwardly in front of the raft in a strange posture, continuously drinking alcohol. Its feet were precisely in contact with the ground, stably supporting its whole body, and its bony arms were carelessly placed on its knee bones.

Gulp

The transparent bottle the skeleton was holding was endlessly filled with alcohol, and every time it poured it into its neck bone, it disappeared with a swallowing sound.

The skeleton, which had been quietly drinking alcohol, looked at me in that same posture and blurted out:

"Shit, what are you looking at? First time seeing a patient drink? Get lost."

"…What?"

For a moment, I thought something was wrong with the translation and took out the translator that Kang Dorim had repeatedly improved from my ear.

The skeleton saw my action and spat out one more word:

"Сука блять."

"…It's definitely cursing."

Cho Yeonseo said with an embarrassed expression that this skeleton, which seemed possessed by a wild Russian, was the only way to cross this river. She had tried various methods to bypass it, but all were blocked. She added that in the dream world, you must unconditionally follow the rules recognized by the unconscious of the subject.

"The dream world mostly operates on completely different rules from the real world."

Cho Yeonseo, who had changed into her magical girl outfit upon entering the dream world, was wearing a purple dress with ample room. The impression given by the outfit, which was neat but somehow precarious in form, was like…

'It looks like… hospital clothes.'

In the real world, because she mainly used mental body avatars, she was drawn in casual clothes in the light novel illustrations. Therefore, it was the first time seeing the bloomed magical girl outfit of [Dream], and it was sad to know where that outfit originated from.

"Then how can we get that skeleton to move us?"

"We need to give the skeleton the most precious thing we have right now. The more it's a gift from someone, the higher value it gives."

As soon as I heard that, I instinctively gripped the smartphone in my coat pocket.

This is absolutely not an option.

"That's a bit difficult."

"This is the dream world, so the existing objects are just copies of what we had right before falling asleep."

"…"

I stood for a moment, recalling Yuki's high school uniform that she

had shown me with a smile last week. Even her father, Ryota, had been looking at me suspiciously since hearing her declare that she would show me first after locking the door.

'I'm sorry, Yuki.'

Although it pained me to use the smartphone Yuki, who follows and cherishes me so much, gave me as a mere pass even if it was in the dream world, I approached the skeleton with large strides and thrust out the smartphone to forget about it.

"It hurts my heart, so just take it quickly."

"Ah! Wait a moment! If you give it with your hand like that…!"

Splash

As soon as the skeleton received the smartphone, it threw it into the river. The brightly colored smartphone gradually sank into the dark, deep river water and soon completely disappeared into the darkness.

For a moment, seeing that, I felt a surge of anger and summoned a silver sword to attack the skeleton.

The sword strike that extended with a brilliant silver flash cut the skeleton in two like a silver crescent moon, but the skeleton scattered like mist and slowly reattached itself.

The sight of the skeleton regenerating in the silver light felt beautifully like moonlight floating over a misty lake on a dark night, which made me even more angry.

"What the hell, you crazy skullhead?!"

"…It always throws away the first item given by hand. You have to give it by holding it in your mouth from the start for it to accept."

Yeonseo demonstrated by holding a high-denomination banknote in her mouth and giving it to the skeleton. The skeleton carefully received it, put down its bottle, and gestured towards the raft.

"…"

Since I had already given the first item by hand, I threw a few candies I received as gifts in Elysion at the skeleton's head. Then I sat down next to Yeonseo, who was already sitting on the raft.

Creak

With a feeble sound, the raft began to guide us across the vast river, cutting through the eerie fog.

The river width, which seemed to be several kilometers, was flowing at a fierce speed, and below the precarious raft, only darkness of unfathomable depth could be seen. Maybe it was just my imagination, but it seemed like strange sounds could be heard whispering from the fog that had filled the surroundings for a while.

'It looked like a narrow river from afar, but sitting on the raft, it feels as massive as the Han River.'

How dark of an imagination must one have to recreate such a gloomy space in a dream?

"It's really unpleasant, isn't it? To have a dream that's dark, gloomy, and damp at night after all that effort."

Suddenly, as if reading my thoughts, Yeonseo muttered, and I couldn't help but look at her in surprise that this kind person would engage in such backbiting. Yeonseo looked at the faint light visible beyond the raft and spoke:

"When I first bloomed as a magical girl, I recreated my parents alive in a dream and invited my grandfather. The sight of him screaming in terror then is still vivid."

"Asya's parents… you mean he screamed upon seeing his own daughter?"

"Yes, ever since I developed narcolepsy at a very young age, I kept dreaming of eating meals with my parents right before the gas explosion accident."

The last happy moment of an unforgettable day in her life.

In that dream, countless versions of Yeonseo's father and mother were sitting at countless tables, eating meals with countless versions of Yeonseo. Thousands of people with the same faces uttering the same words, raising their spoons at the same timing.

Yeonseo's grandfather, who was invited into the dream, had to repeat the same actions thousands of times with them, and Yeonseo, who invited him into the dream, repeated it with an excited expression next to her grandfather.

-Please… please don't show me this again.

-…

After waking from the dream, her grandfather confirmed his granddaughter's rotten, crumbling heart and wept, overcome with sadness.

"…"

"For me, it was a memory I thought was very beautiful and nostalgic… but for my grandfather, it seems it was like a nightmare of dreaming the same dream thousands of times."

"Th-that's…"

Yeonseo pressed my nose gently and laughed.

"It's okay. Thinking about it now, I don't know why I thought that scene was beautiful either."

"It's a memory with your parents. That's natural."

"Maybe."

As if cutting off my light consolation, Yeonseo looked at the light across the river with a still distant expression.

It was just light scattered and diffused in the mist in the darkness.

"Maybe during that time when I had narcolepsy and kept having the same dream repeatedly, I was dead. Trapped in my own world,

twisted and withering to the point where I couldn't accept even my closest family…"

Death.

She discovered death in her own life, slowly rotting away, captivated by memories. She lived among people to break down the wall of memories cast over her life. And she said she boldly came all the way to Russia, her grandfather's homeland, to see things she hadn't seen before.

"So… so it doesn't feel like someone else's story. Because this dark and gloomy scene might be the most beautiful memory holding onto Alisa's tomorrow."

"I see."

After that, we crossed the river on the raft in silence for a while.

Creak

The skeleton kept pretending its arm was sore and tried to subtly pass the long oar it was holding to me in the middle of the conversation. But I ignored it to the end because I didn't want to listen to the request of the damned skeleton that had thrown away my precious smartphone.

As we were crossing the river towards the faintly glowing space, three bears wearing black hats and holding vodka bottles blocked our path.

We tried to ignore them and walk past, but the three bears moved as if they were one body, like soldiers who had received formal training, blocking our path forward. Yeonseo said she was seeing the bears for the first time, as she had failed after figuring out how to break through the river.

"Why does everyone in this neighborhood hold a bottle of alcohol?"

"Hehe…"

Yeonseo evaded answering with an awkward laugh.

“I wonder if giving them something will solve it.”

Thinking it might be resolved by giving something like with the unpleasant skeleton earlier, I threw a wad of dollars at the bears, which was the most valuable item left in my pocket besides the Glass Star. The boldly thrown bills scattered in the air, falling to the ground in curves.

Grooowl!!

The bears abandoned the precise movements they had maintained until now and frantically tried to pick up the bills, attacking each other with vodka bottles.

“Let’s move forward in this gap.”

“…”

Yeonseo, who was already running towards the light visible ahead, quietly said to me:

“Those bears might be the hospital security guards.”

“What?”

“Those hats. They’re the hats worn by the security guards at the hospital where Alisa is hospitalized.”

She said that because the hospital rarely paid proper wages, given how it was run, the three security guards privately accepted money and allowed patients to run errands for alcohol or go out. And the curses uttered by the skeleton ferryman were exactly the same as the words spoken by an old man drinking alcohol in a corner of the hospital.

Maybe.

“Maybe Alisa isn’t really asleep now…”

She might have learned about the world through the sounds coming from the hospital room while trapped in her sleeping body.

“…”

“…”

Because we imagined that to be such a terrible thing, we increased our running speed and entered Alisa’s deepest consciousness.

* * *

Alisa, Dad hopes you’re playing to your heart’s content in dreamland.

Alisa, your name comes from the name of a beautiful girl in a fairy tale.

Alisa, if you ever wake up, let’s go see something wonderful in Murmansk together with Dad.

Alisa, we’ve finally found a doctor who treated a patient with the same symptoms as you.

Alisa, Mom and Dad will be going to Europe for a while. Don’t worry. We’ve hired a guide who says he knows Europe very well.

Alisa, I love you.

You must wake up and tell us what happened in dreamland.

[…]

[Yes.]

[I love you too.]

Chapter 92 : In the Dream Where the Flower of the Other Shore Blooms

We ran towards the faintly visible light. By the time we had run so far that we could no longer hear the sound of bears fighting over bills, the surrounding scenery had completely changed.

“A chicken in the sky…?”

“…The hospital always serves eggs for breakfast. Hungry people wake up early and try to get even one more at the cafeteria.”

A chicken floating in the blue sky without sun or moon was laying a giant egg, and huge lights flowing out between the eggshells brightly illuminated the surroundings.

And under the softly spreading light, hundreds of medical charts were frantically running around between a vast forest, searching for something.

Patient portraits were clipped to the corners of the medical charts, changing expressions and acting as faces, and each held a pen-like spear in hand.

[Find Alisa!]

[The King and Queen command us to capture Alisa!]

[Since the King and Queen cannot move, we must find her!]

[We must capture Alisa for the execution!]

[We must behead Alisa!]

‘The unconscious is trying to capture the dream’s subject on its own? To kill her?’

As soon as I heard this, I looked at Cho Yeonseo. Her complexion was pale, and she was sweating nervously.

“Those paper soldiers seem to be Alisa’s guilt.”

“Guilt?”

Yeonseo spoke painfully, tightly gripping her sleeve as if she had realized something. She said there was a man among the dream residents she had cared for who had completely separated from his family due to alcohol and drugs he had foolishly chosen to become addicted to.

“He created his guilt in the same form as his family members and made them endlessly stab him with knives.”

Receiving the harshest punishment in the most desired form in a dream.

Yeonseo, unable to ignore the pain of the man who had been screaming in his sleep for a week, stopped the dream. In the end, the man quietly disappeared somewhere to punish himself, she said.

“…”

“For Alisa, the objects of guilt are probably…”

Her parents who went missing after leaving for Europe to treat her incurable disease. And all the people who take care of her useless self or are harmed by the hospital room she occupies.

“I wonder if the ‘King and Queen’ refer to her parents?”

“…She must think it’s right for her parents to execute her.”

The girl’s bizarre world, created based on faint sounds heard in eternal sleep, was a vast execution ground made to punish herself.

A bizarre dream world where, unable to overcome guilt, she tries to

offer herself as a sacrifice to the people who cherished her most. It was a cruel dream crudely woven together with limited knowledge of the outside world.

“What should we do if Alisa’s unconscious is trying to destroy itself?”

“Usually, people don’t die in dreams no matter how much they’re hurt as long as they don’t lose their sense of self. Even people with weak egos only weaken themselves by appearing small and frail in dreams, but the power to maintain themselves exists.”

However.

Yeonseo spoke with pitiful eyes, watching the encirclement that the soldiers were gradually tightening.

“Alisa never had a chance to strongly build her ego in the real world. People with weak memories and experiences to maintain themselves also have weak egos in dreams and easily lose themselves.”

“Then what happens if Alisa, with her weak power to maintain herself, is caught by the soldiers and executed in the dream world?”

“…”

Yeonseo didn’t answer my question, tightly closing her mouth and closing her eyes while scattering purple starlight as much as possible.

‘Is it so ominous that she can’t even speak of it?’

Unlike her calm expression, emotions such as empathy, anger, sadness, and pity were leaking from her heart.

“I can faintly feel Alisa’s consciousness in the deep part of that forest.”

A gloomy corner of the forest where the light leaking from the egg laid by the chicken doesn’t reach.

Looking closely, clearings could be seen sparsely scattered among the lushly spreading trees. And hundreds of medical chart soldiers were slowly but steadily advancing towards that place.

The dream Alisa created to punish herself was incomplete due to limited information, but it was moving at a very slow pace to achieve its purpose.

“The soldiers are gradually heading that way.”

“I’ll try to divert their attention for a moment.”

[Dream] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Sleepwalking Form

Yeonseo quietly interlaced her fingers and concentrated, emitting purple starlight. It scattered like purple clouds, spreading here and there throughout the forest.

[Aah! Run away!]

[Fire! It’s fire!]

Soon, huge waves of fire spread throughout the forest with eerie heat. The paper soldiers panicked and retreated at the threatening sight that seemed like it would destroy everything.

“I’ve mixed in a dream of running away from something for a moment. But even if we mix in other dreams like this, they’ll soon return to their original purpose by the subject. Especially quickly if it’s a dream they’ve never thought of before.”

“I understand. Then let’s go to the clearing in the forest while we have this chance.”

As I headed towards the clearing with Yeonseo, I also floated a fantasy of the griffin, one of the puppets controlled by Doctor, in the sky for the paper soldiers to see.

Kuoooooo

As the fluorescent green griffin clacked its beak and flew over the paper soldiers, they were astonished and ran away even faster.

[Aaaah! It’s a monster!]

[Retreat! Retreat!]

[Wait a moment! The King said we must not retreat no matter what!]

[This isn't retreating, it's charging around in a wide circle!]

[Charge in the opposite direction!!]

Leaving behind the noisy sounds of the soldiers, we ran towards the clearing where Alisa was. And the more we ran through the forest, the more eerie it felt.

'All the trees look exactly the same.'

The bizarre forest landscape, with trees of identical appearance neatly arranged in rows, repeated endlessly.

The same scenery no matter how far we ran.

The same shaped trees appearing no matter how many we passed.

A bizarre forest where rocks, soil, insects, birds, and wild animals did not exist.

We ran through the eerie landscape towards the clearing.

"It's here!"

The place Yeonseo's urgently outstretched hand pointed to was a strange clearing. There were mountains of teacups and teapots messily piled up, and around the square table placed in the center, shards of broken teacups were scattered everywhere.

And the only thing placed in front of the table among the empty chairs was…

"What are these…"

"Huge teapots?"

From teapots large enough for a person to barely fit inside, faint breathing sounds could be heard.

“Ali…sa…?”

Yeonseo carefully lifted the lid of the teapot with trembling hands to look inside.

Click

Inside was a girl in deep sleep, curled up with her long black hair completely covering her head. Her chest was moving faintly, breathing in and out.

‘She’s safe. And maintaining herself more strongly than expected.’

Confirming that Alisa was safe and fully maintaining herself in the dream, Yeonseo let out a sigh of relief, dropping a single tear.

Yeonseo’s lips, which had turned pale blue from imagining the worst while crossing the forest, were trembling and loosening.

“Thank goodness.”

“Yes, it is.”

“Alisa couldn’t hide her bewilderment as she watched the woman muttering ‘thank goodness.'”

“Huh?”

“Alisa decided to pretend to sleep and assess the situation, but she was anxious because the two women had completely discovered her location.”

“…”

“Alisa was completely at a loss for words due to anxiety. Not that she could speak in the first place.”

“You’ve been doing well so far.”

“Um… don’t be anxious. We came to save you, Alisa.”

Yeonseo reached out gently with a smile towards Alisa lying in the teapot, and Alisa, who had covered her head with her hair, carelessly

got up and took that hand.

Alisa came out of the teapot and stood in the messy clearing, staring at me quietly before blurting out:

"…Who?"

"I'm a passing magical girl."

"I see. Which side?"

"The side that came to save you."

"Nice to meet you, magical girl of [The side that came to save you]."

"Yes, nice to meet you too, Alisa."

"I almost thought you were the White Rabbit or Silver Pigeon."

"How interesting that there were such wonderful rabbits and pigeons."

"The Brown Cat or Mad Hatter wouldn't come here."

"Oh dear. That's too bad."

"It's okay. There's nothing good about the tea party starting early."

I finished introducing myself smoothly to Alisa. Yeonseo, who had been looking at me with incredulous eyes, tightly grasped Alisa's hand.

"I'm Cho Yeonseo. By another name, Anastasia, and people close to me call me 'Asya'."

"Anastasia. Which side of magical girl are you?"

"The magical girl of [Dream]. I came to save you from the endlessly continuing dream."

"Magical girl of [Dream]. Nice to meet you."

"Yes. Nice to meet you too."

Yeonseo muttered while quietly embracing the small Alisa. Despite Yeonseo not being particularly tall, Alisa was completely enveloped in her purple skirt.

“I really… wanted to save you. I’m glad to meet you.”

“…”

I felt something off while watching this scene.

‘Two emotions I’m feeling from Alisa? Not complex feelings, but just emotions for two people?’

Alisa muttered with wide open eyes in Yeonseo’s arms.

“Alisa asked the purple woman, Anastasia, if she could really wake up from the dream.”

“Huh? Oh… yes. Since you’re maintaining such a clear form while being the subject of the dream, you should be able to wake up if we leave like this.”

Yeonseo answered in a slightly flustered voice, but grasped Alisa’s shoulders and looked at her as if impressed. She marveled at how Alisa could maintain such a clear sense of self despite never having properly experienced the real world.

“How did you really…”

“No.”

“Huh?”

“I am not Alisa, the subject of the dream.”

“…”

The girl with the exact same appearance as Alisa fumbled in her pocket and took out a small mouse. The appearance of a small baby mouse, limp as if hibernating.

“This is Alisa, the subject of the dream. I only helped create Alisa’s

dream.”

“…”

“…”

A very faint feeling of embarrassment spread from the limp mouse that the girl had taken out.

“Th-then who are you?”

“The dark blue crow. Or one who shares the name Alisa.”

Chapter 93 : In the Dream Where the Flower of the Other Shore Blooms

The first thing Alisa became aware of in her life was a warm darkness.

Fragments of experience too few to form a personality. For her, who was merely floating in the sea of unconsciousness because of this, one day darkness came.

She first became aware of the world in the sea of dreams due to the darkness that swallowed ignorance and chaos.

A self more incomplete and dependent than others.

A patchwork crudely woven together from fairy tales read by her father and the unconscious of others.

My name is Alisa.

A being that only sleeps from the moment of birth.

A small, insignificant winter mouse.

-Alisa, Dad will tell you a fairy tale.

-Alisa, Mom and Dad are just waiting for you to wake up.

-Let’s go see a wonderful sight in Murmansk together.

-I love you, Alisa.

[I… love you too.]

-Alisa's parents have gone missing?

-I heard they were scammers who lured desperate parents to bring money and then disposed of them.

-Oh my… then that child is now…

-Left alone.

[…]

Nevertheless, Alisa felt grateful to the darkness that enveloped her incomplete consciousness.

[If it weren't for you, I would have been nothing.]

The darkness merely enveloped Alisa's incomplete dream in silence.

[Thank you. Who are you?]

-The dark blue crow, I will someday devour you.

[Devour?]

-Due to a curse, my essence has become chaos that watches over and destroys humans.

[Then I'll give you my name as a gift for waking me up.]

-Name?

[Yes. If you're born into this world, use my name.]

-Alisa.

[It's the only gift I can give you.]

Alisa ruminated on her parents' disappearance and the numerous sins she had committed, which she had come to know in this incomplete world. No matter how she thought about it, she was nothing but a scrap that should quickly disappear from this world.

[I want to die like this. But I can't do anything.]

-You don’t know death.

[No. I’m already dead.]

Alisa gratefully asked the darkness, another Alisa, who had briefly pulled her out of the sea of unconsciousness:

[Please. Let me create a dream where I can be punished.]

-I have a duty to watch over the world through you until the tea party begins.

[But I can’t see anything and don’t know anything?]

-Then this world will be nothing to me.

[When that time comes. Kill me. So that Mom and Dad can resolve their resentment towards me.]

Alisa knew this was self-satisfaction.

Even if she pathetically loses herself in a dream, it would mean nothing to her dead parents.

Even so, she couldn’t forgive herself.

When this winter ends, the Mom and Dad created by her unconscious will come to punish her.

When that time comes, even in the form of an insignificant mouse, let’s raise both arms high and run towards the two of them.

Let’s drive the nails of resentment pulled out by the two of them into this unworthy heart.

[I love you… and I’m sorry.]

* * *

“…”

“…”

Yeonseo and I were at a loss for words after hearing the story told by the dark blue crow… the magical girl of [Death], who had the exact same appearance as Alisa.

We had been sitting in the clearing for a long time, listening to the story told by the small black-haired girl.

Yeonseo had been shedding tears endlessly out of pity since the middle of the story. And in her arms was still the limp small mouse.

‘So that’s how born 3-star magical girls except [Revelation] descend.’

The reason why ordinary Emily Hopkins could act as [War]’s messenger.

And the reason why the magical girl of [Death] was indifferent to this world.

They originally devoured the personalities of the girls they inhabited due to their enormous power, and descended using the world they had observed as a criterion when the second red broadcast opened.

They couldn’t come out into the world until the girl they inhabited died.

All the cause and effect relationships fell into place. And I understood why the colorless Glass Star had prevented me from attacking Emily Hopkins.

‘I almost faced [War] unprepared.’

I felt my heart sink as I recalled the attacks on Emily Hopkins that I had hesitated over several times.

“So we waited here for the day of the tea party to arrive.”

“By tea party, you mean…”

“The brown cat, the mad hatter, the silver pigeon, and me.”

The dark blue crow.

“These four of us establishing a new order based on the world each of us has observed.”

“What happens to Alisa when that time comes?”

“She dies.”

As soon as she heard this, Yeonseo hid the mouse in her arms and glared strongly at [Death].

“You have no right to end someone’s life.”

“It happens whether I want it or not. And it’s what she herself wants.”

“There’s no way such an unreasonable thing could…!”

Yeonseo looked at [Death] with anger in her purple eyes. And the more she defended Alisa, the greater the guilt spreading from the small mouse in her arms grew.

“Asya, stop. You’re making Alisa suffer more.”

“Ugh…!”

Yeonseo could no longer say anything and just hugged the small mouse… Alisa.

I looked at the limp small mouse with a bitter expression. And I cast an illusion magic on the mouse to reflect its mental image.

Alisa’s figure, incredibly faint unlike the [Death] in front of us.

Even her self-awareness was weak.

[…]

“Alisa.”

[I want to die.]

“Don’t say such things.”

[It was a life with no difference between death and life, unable to do anything.]

"…"

[If another Alisa could live using this insignificant soul as nourishment, then…]

She would be satisfied with that.

But Yeonseo denied it.

"No. That's not true! There must be a better way! I'll help you make it happen!"

[A better way?]

"Yes, surely a better way than now."

Yeonseo quietly looked at the chicken floating in the sky of the dream world.

The chicken was still laying shining eggs.

Beneath it, enveloped in light, was a castle made of cold snow.

The King and Queen.

The place where the strong collective unconscious created by Alisa's guilt resided.

"Let's find out where Alisa's guilt started from. And overcome it."

[…]

"Let's go find the precious things forgotten in the nightmare."

Yeonseo started walking, preciously holding the small mouse in her arms. The magical girl of [Death] just quietly watched from behind.

If.

If there was a way to coexist with Alisa without being caught up in

[Death]'s great power.

If there was a way to somehow persuade those we thought were enemies.

I wanted to choose that.

'But it's impossible to compromise with [War]…'

[Revelation] with no purpose other than the given order.

[Death] who wanted to fulfill the wish of the girl who gave her name.

Unlike them, [War] strongly desired chaos on her own.

Why?

Her methods were too closely tied to the human world to simply hate humanity.

'Even Emily Hopkins loved humans, just in a twisted way. She didn't hate them.'

I was just quietly following them, lost in complex feelings.

We walked on in silence for a long time, and finally arrived right under the giant chicken.

A castle made of cold snow.

The execution ground Alisa wanted.

The soldiers made of medical charts were still searching in the forest, so the inside of the castle was quiet without any sign of people.

Whooosh

Only the sound of our footsteps echoed in the corridor where a cold winter wind blew.

"No one… is here?"

“This is the deepest part of Alisa’s unconscious.”

[Death] and I were following behind Yeonseo, prepared for any situation.

Yeonseo, holding the small mouse in her arms, moved forward.

“It’s scary. I was like that before too.”

[…]

“Don’t worry. I’ll protect you.”

When the small Alisa in her arms started trembling with fear, Yeonseo wrapped her in purple energy. And she continued moving towards the deepest part of the castle.

-We were killed because of you, Alisa!

-Such a useless girl.

-You should disappear from this world.

Whispers echoing in the corridor.

They appeared like ghosts and hurled abuse at Alisa who had entered this place.

-You should never have been born!

-Just wasting a hospital bed, you useless thing.

-Die!! Just die!! You bug who can’t even die alone!!

“No.”

Yeonseo spoke clearly for Alisa’s guilt that filled the corridor to hear, her purple energy rippling.

“No one is born into this world without meaning.”

The numerous dreams of those [Dream] had watched over.

They rose like purple mist and drove away the evil spirits spewing abuse.

“No one is born into this world to die.”

Overcoming past despair.

Desiring today’s happiness.

Believing in tomorrow’s hope.

Eating delicious food, being with loved ones, smiling at bright sunlight, sitting comfortably in a warm room, smelling fragrant flowers, drinking a cool glass of water, running in the free wind, letting your body sway to the sound of waves.

Such small but happy dreams.

The world Alisa hadn’t seen.

And the world Yeonseo once couldn’t see either.

The evil spirits born from guilt scattered due to the warm temperature shown by the dreams.

Yeonseo and Alisa moved towards the deep part of the cold corridor, using the warm dreams as a lantern.

“They’re coming from behind too.”

“I’ll handle that.”

At the casual remark from the magical girl of [Death], I took out her unique weapon, the scythe.

“…”

[Death] was looking at me with strange eyes as I was already using her weapon that should have only bloomed later.

I swung the scythe to cut down the remnants of unconsciousness rushing from behind.

The giant scythe being swung.

A silver trajectory.

Swish

They disappeared within the silver trajectory curved like a crescent moon, uttering curses ephemerally like mist.

-Aaaaah!! Die Alisa!!

-Because of you!! Because of you!!

-You maggot who can’t do anything on your own!!

The fragments of guilt that a girl had carried her entire life melted away by warm dreams and were cut by a scythe filled with firm will.

We moved forward like that, lightening the weight of life carried by a girl who had lived her entire life in the sea of unconsciousness.

Chapter 94 : In the Dream Where the Flower of the Other Shore Blooms

-Dad has something he really wants to show you.

-The place where Dad was born. There's truly a magical scenery in Murmansk.

-Let's definitely go see it together.

-That's Dad's only wish.

With those words, Dad never came again.

What was it that Dad wanted to show?

For Alisa, the world was too far away.

She couldn't understand most of what her parents had said.

The only thing she could understand was guilt.

Her own world, disconnected from the outside world.

A world barely created with the help of the dark blue crow.

She waited for death in the darkness.

* * *

The huge hall made of ice in the deepest part of the castle was full of medical chart soldiers.

They stood in rows with their spears raised sharply.

At the very back, a middle-aged couple with black hair sat on thrones with solemn expressions.

[How impertinent, Alisa.]

[How dare you come here with your dirty feet.]

[The execution will only be carried out by my order.]

[Have you come to resolve your own guilt?]

[How insolent.]

[Even salvation is a luxury for you.]

“Are those… Alisa’s parents?”

“That’s right.”

Yeonseo was on guard, emitting purple starlight while holding Alisa in her arms. I was standing guard at the back to protect everyone, including the magical girl of [Death].

Twitch

The small mouse-like Alisa, who had been limp in Yeonseo’s arms, got up. And she broke free from Yeonseo’s arms and ran forward.

The small mouse quickly moving away.

It happened so suddenly.

“Alisa!?”

“It’s dangerous!”

“…”

While Yeonseo and I were shocked, and the magical girl of [Death] watched quietly, Alisa stood before her parents in her mouse form for the first time.

“Dad, Mom.”

[Shut that filthy mouth.]

[We died because of you!! We lost our lives because of you!!]

[Because of a daughter who was no different from a corpse for 16 years!!]

[We lost all our time!!]

[Now die!]

“I’m sorry. I came to apologize.”

Seeing this, Yeonseo rushed forward urgently, but the paper soldiers standing on both sides of the huge hall rushed in all at once to block her.

Paper soldiers coming like waves.

-Stop her!! Don’t let her interfere with the execution!!

-Everyone rush in!

-We must not let her approach the King!

Amidst this, Yeonseo desperately shouted.

“Alisa!! Don’t listen!! It can’t be!! There are no parents who want their child to die!!”

[Dream] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Sleepwalking Form

All kinds of people’s dreams flowed out from the purple smoke emanating from Yeonseo’s body, coloring the huge hall.

A space full of cold darkness.

Dreams painted with purple paint appeared there, separating everyone like a river.

Some soldiers fell into a dream of people swimming at the beach.

Some soldiers were trapped in a dream of the rainy season and became soaking wet.

Yeonseo jumped over the paper soldiers who had fallen into confusion and ran forward.

“Alisa!! I’ll help you!!”

I stepped forward to help Yeonseo.

Snap!

In sync with my finger snap, the colorful dreams spread out in the space expanded like a kaleidoscope.

Dreams shining so brilliantly in all colors that you couldn’t distinguish even an inch ahead, like placing a huge prism on a painting covered in paint.

Dreams that bubble up and disappear in people’s minds became a huge painting where even the unconscious gets lost and wanders, receiving the starlight of deception that changes perception and deceives the world.

The dreams that had formed like rivers became a colorful sea, swallowing countless unconscious like waves.

-Aagh?! The dreams are expanding!!

-I can’t see what’s what!

-We need to stop it!

Red

Blue

Green

Yellow

Pink

Purple

In the brilliantly shining colorful dream.

The beauty of the world Alisa hadn't seen.

Three girls run to help the girl facing her guilt, hoping that even a little of it would reach her.

Finally, we stand next to the small, insignificant mouse.

"Alisa, you're not alone."

"How could you go like that alone."

"…"

The king who rules the dreams of death, watching this scene, rose from his seat.

[I left my hometown because of you.]

[Because there was no hospital there that could admit you.]

The king with the same face as Alisa's father slowly approached the small mouse.

[I lost my job because of you.]

[Because you had seizures as if you were about to die while just sleeping all day.]

[I left the job I had worked at all my life to take care of you.]

"…I'm sorry."

Finally, the two facing each other.

A small mouse and a solemn king.

The representation of Alisa's perception of her relationship with her father.

[Die.]

“…Okay.”

Yeonseo came forward as the mouse lowered its head and shed tears.

“Alisa.”

“Yes?”

“Did your father… really want you to die?”

“…”

Yeonseo carefully extended her hand filled with purple starlight towards the king.

The trace of her father remaining so faintly in the unconscious.

To help find that faint trace that normally couldn’t even find a fragment, I cast the blessing of cause and effect reversal on Yeonseo as she extended her hand.

‘I hope it succeeds.’

Purple starlight poured over the king wearing elegant black clothes. Gradually, a gentle voice different from before flowed from him.

-Dad has something he really wants to show you.

-The place where Dad was born. There’s truly a magical scenery in Murmansk.

-Let’s definitely go see it together.

-That’s Dad’s only wish.

“I’ll show you the real dream contained in the unconscious, not your father distorted by guilt.”

Purple mist spreading over the cold space.

The warm purple mist gathered and formed small clouds. And inside

those clouds, a man with a gentle smile was excitedly talking to his wife, holding a fairy tale book in one hand.

-Haha, look at this, honey! The corners of her mouth turned up! Alisa must be in a good mood.

-Really? It looks the same to me.

-No, Alisa likes listening to <Alice in Wonderland> the most.

"…Yes. It was fun."

In another cloud, the old man and patients who always had gloomy expressions in the hospital were singing happy birthday with awkward smiles. And the one who had gathered them was her father in a ridiculous outfit.

-Haha, it's been so long since we've had a birthday party in this gloomy hospital.

-I'm so happy I don't even think about drinking.

-Happy birthday, Alisa.

-Thank you all for coming.

-No, we want this child to wake up too.

-Alisa is too pretty and precious to be lying here.

"…I didn't hear this. Th-thank you."

In another cloud, her parents were massaging Alisa's arms and legs, praying for her to wake up healthy. The three hospital security guards took turns sitting, bringing juice and food for them who were tired.

-Your daughter is really cute.

-I have a daughter too, so I understand how you feel.

-It's hard to make a living so we take bribes, but at times like this, it hurts my heart.

-If there's anything you need, just say it… I'll do it for free, especially.

-Th-thank you.

"…Thank you."

In another cloud, her parents were wrapping her in a handmade blanket.

In another cloud, her parents were praying with their hands clasped.

Though it was hard

Sad

And painful

Still, her parents lived for her.

Yeonseo was shedding tears as she watched this scene.

Probably the same scene her parents had shown in their lifetime.

"Did your parents really want you to die?"

"…"

"At least. I don't think so."

Alisa, who had been in the form of a small mouse, had somehow returned to her original form.

A girl with black hair.

Clumsy and small, but.

Now not giving up on herself.

Alisa approached her father, who was smiling, surrounded by purple mist instead of a solemn expression.

"Da…d."

“Yes.”

“I’m sorry.”

“No, it’s okay.”

“I love you.”

“Me too.”

Alisa quietly hugged him and sobbed.

“I’m sorry… I couldn’t go to Murmansk.”

“Make sure to go sometime. It’s really beautiful.”

“Yes. I’ll definitely… wake up. And go.”

“Aurora. There’s a wonderful aurora there.”

The man in the purple mist gradually disappeared, with a regretful expression.

A fragment of unconsciousness remaining so faintly.

Even with the miracle of cause and effect reversal, it couldn’t last for a long time.

But I could help make it a wonderful farewell.

[Deception] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Dream World

Rumble

The ceiling of the castle made of cold snow gradually disappeared.

What filled its place was the endless winter night sky I had seen sometime before.

No longer did the cold execution ground to execute a girl exist around.

An endless snowfield.

A quiet night due to snow.

Darkness spread over the white earth.

In the vast darkness, fluorescent auroras were shining, fluttering like curtains.

That curtain of light, which seemed like it could cover the entire vast plain, shone so brilliantly.

It seemed to shine with all fragments of emotions mixed in.

Because it looked like Alisa's life, which had arisen from incomplete fragments of emotions.

It felt like tears would come.

Green.

Blue.

Perhaps white.

Perhaps the blanket Alisa's parents had covered her with.

A huge curtain of light.

Alisa, holding her mom and dad's hands in both of hers.

Looked up at it.

"…"

"…"

"…"

Alisa didn't exchange any more words with her parents' unconsciousness slowly disappearing into the purple mist.

Whether it was her hesitation due to being inexperienced in

expressing emotions, or whether she was just trying to feel this moment as much as possible because she couldn't find any more words to say.

Because we couldn't know, Yeonseo and I could only watch Alisa like that.

And the magical girl of [Death] also quietly watched everything.

Chapter 95 : The Reborn Girl

Aurora adorning the night sky. And a girl left alone.

After all dreams ended, only silence remained.

The purple mist showed all the love Alisa's parents had left behind, and their faintly remaining unconsciousness had exhausted all its power.

I exhaled a cold sigh, feeling suffocated by that silence.

"…"

"…Alisa."

Yeonseo approached Alisa, who was quietly looking up at the night sky, and hugged her.

"…I want."

"Hm?"

"I want to see… Dad's real hometown… the real aurora."

"Okay. Let's go see it together."

Finally, a life goal for the girl who had been waiting for death on her bed.

But.

In just 3 months from now.

'She will be completely absorbed by the magical girl of [Death].'

The descent of a born 3-star magical girl.

The descent of the magical girl of [Death].

I have a duty to revive the souls of hundreds of girls killed by the Scavengers.

‘I must revive their souls from [Death]’s domain.’

There are impossible constraints for ordinary people, but I must persuade her to at least reverse the deaths of magical girls.

“…”

It was not easy to accept this in front of Alisa’s will, which had been revived like a candle flame flickering again in the bitter winter wind.

It was so difficult that I couldn’t say anything.

As I stood still like that, I heard the sound of footsteps crunching the cold snow beside me.

Crunch

Crunch

“Alisa.”

The magical girl of [Death], who had been just watching everything from behind until now, approached Alisa. Seeing this, Yeonseo was startled and hid Alisa behind her, looking at her with wary eyes.

“Alisa has already said goodbye to her parents! What do you want?”

“You don’t need to worry. Alisa knows what I want to say.”

“What?”

Alisa, who had been standing behind Yeonseo, came forward upon hearing this.

Two Alisas facing each other.

The two girls with completely identical appearances could not be distinguished except for the direction of their footprints in the snow,

as only their expressions were different.

One expressionless.

One with a hesitant expression.

“Alisa.”

“Alisa.”

Two girls calling the same name to each other.

Two girls born from the world of death.

“Is your promise to give me a name still valid?”

“…Yes. Because thanks to another Alisa, I was able to become myself.”

“Is your wish to die still valid?”

“…No. I want to… fulfill Dad’s dream in the real world.”

The expressionless Alisa held out her white hand and took the hesitant Alisa’s hand.

“Your name and my name is Alisa.”

“…We are the same Alisa.”

One became Alisa by receiving the life of a girl remaining in the unconscious from the dark blue crow.

One became Alisa from a sleeping baby mouse in chaos due to the warm world of death.

‘Could it be…?’

I could only hold my breath as I thought of a possibility.

The descent of born 3-stars except [Revelation].

The hidden constraint in it is the death of the girl who becomes the

eyes to view the world.

It happens automatically when the second red broadcast occurs.

Or it happens as the death of the girl who becomes the eyes.

“Alisa, do you have anything you want to do from now on?”

“…I want to wake up now.”

The hesitant Alisa lowered her head with guilt for breaking her promise, but answered while holding the hand tightly.

“I want to wake up now and… see what Dad wanted to show me.”

“I see.”

“I’m sorry.”

“What are you sorry for?”

“I broke my promise. You have things to do too.”

The expressionless Alisa, the dark blue crow, smiled very slightly for the first time.

A faint smile that seemed like it could be erased at any moment.

“I would have said. If this world meant nothing to you”

Then it would mean nothing to me either.

“If this world is a place filled with your father’s love for you.”

Then this world has meaning.

“Alisa.”

“Yes.”

“Do you have confidence that you’ll be happy?”

“…I don’t know.”

For a girl who had slept on a bed her whole life, this world was too distant and frightening.

An unknown world.

“But still…”

Alisa looked at Yeonseo, who had been cheering for her beside her.

Yeonseo was watching with surprised eyes, her mouth covered, as if she had sensed something from the conversation between the two Alisas.

“The dreams Anastasia showed me. And the numerous fantasies.”

Eating delicious things.

Seeing beautiful things.

Playing in warm places.

“If that’s what this world is like. If that’s what Dad wanted to show me.”

For the first time, Alisa’s will turned towards the outside world, not the fairy tale or hospital.

For the first time since birth, she turned towards the warm outside world, not the death she had first become aware of and wanted.

“I want to see it.”

“I see.”

The other Alisa, who had returned to being expressionless, closed her eyes. And from her chest, a dark blue Glass Star appeared, shining faintly like the darkness in the corner of the night sky where the aurora had risen.

Three huge dark blue starlights rose in a triangle, revealing an enormous presence like constellations in the sky above.

The light of death.

A light that is cold and quiet, but for someone, it's the light that first guided them to see this world.

"Then for me, this world will become a gift to you."

"Wh-what are you trying to say…?"

"Alisa."

"…Yes."

The Alisa shining with dark blue light raised her hand and cupped the face of her other self looking at her.

"Because you gave me my name, I was able to become myself."

"But that's…!"

"Because you gave me the name Alisa, which was the only thing you had and the most precious. I was able to create this world."

Two girls with a dark blue star between them in the quiet snowy field where the aurora shines.

And the dark blue star shone and passed over to the other Alisa.

Alisa who received the star shed tears in disbelief

Alisa who handed over the star smiled with relief and blessed her.

A miracle that only two beings sharing the same name can show.

"Therefore, I will disappear from this world as Alisa."

And you are reborn as the magical girl of [Death].

"What, what will happen to you?"

"Alisa."

"Answer me…! If you disappear too now…!"

"Alisa."

“There’s no need for someone like me to remain…! I just want to see Dad’s hometown…!”

“Alisa.”

“…Yes.”

The girl who became Alisa from the magical girl of [Death] smiled.

“Congratulations on being born into this world. Go and see many things.”

The dark blue energy spread throughout the world of death poured down.

The energy of death pouring down like a meteor shower.

They began to gather towards the Glass Star held by one girl.

The girl who was gradually becoming blurry was watching this with satisfaction.

“I’m glad. That this world is no longer meaningless.”

“I’ll, I’ll definitely be happy.”

The girl holding the dark blue Glass Star and accepting the energy of death shouted loudly.

“I!! I’ll definitely live a happy life!!”

Dad.

Mom.

And my other self.

The girl who had confirmed the hearts of those who had cheered for her as she was slowly dying in the world of death shouted loudly.

“I’ll see many things and live happily like a dream!!”

“…Yes.”

The dark blue crow, now completely blurry, confirmed the will to live shining in Alisa's eyes.

"Anastasia."

"Yes…?"

"I want you to teach the magical girl of [Death] about the outside. Please do what I couldn't."

"Yes, certainly."

Yeonseo nodded with firm resolve.

"Magical girl who resembles the white rabbit."

"Yes."

Considering the dark blue crow's way of metaphor, the white rabbit is probably the goddess of [Beginning]. And she chose to change Alisa's fate and herself instead of the tea party… the descent.

"It would be good to have a conversation with the brown cat."

"But the magical girl of [War] is…"

"The brown cat wants chaos but doesn't lie."

"Okay."

"Even if not persuasion, choosing the best option will do."

"I understand."

"The mad hatter… probably won't be of any use even if you meet."

"What?"

I was surprised to hear information about the personality of the magical girl of [Plague] for the first time, but she, with only her upper body remaining now, quietly just left words to say.

"Her essence is cluster. Spread. She cannot settle where there is only

one soul.”

“…”

“Even if you meet her, she will have become someone else.”

“I understand.”

“I hope you will teach the magical girl of [Death] many things.”

“Of course. I live for all magical girls.”

Having said everything, the dark blue crow looked at Alisa preciously holding the dark blue Glass Star.

Dark blue starlight filling the snowy field.

Endlessly pouring meteor shower of death.

We felt our consciousness gradually blurring in that scene.

The end of the dream.

It meant the extinction of one personality.

“Magical girl of [Death]. Be happy.”

The dark blue crow, who had suddenly appeared and built a world for one girl, received only the name Alisa.

She perished, becoming the soul of an ordinary girl.

The death of death.

It was the beginning of a new birth.

With the dark blue light filling our sight, we opened our eyes in the hospital room.

“Ugh…”

“Phew.”

Yeonseo and I got up unsteadily from the hospital room sofa that felt unfamiliar, as if we had seen it years ago.

“A-Alisa!!”

Even while staggering, Yeonseo turned around and called the black-haired girl.

“Yes.”

The girl who had lived between dreams and death for 16 years had now awakened in the world of light.

“…Thank you.”

“Alisa!”

Yeonseo rushed to Alisa and hugged her.

The two girls shared each other’s warmth like that for a while.

“…Anastasia.”

“Call me Asya.”

“Okay. Asya.”

Alisa broke free from Yeonseo’s embrace and tried to get up, her whole body trembling.

“It’s dangerous to get up suddenly!”

“No. It’s okay.”

Wobble

Yeonseo supported Alisa’s body as she tried to get up forcefully from the bed.

I approached them and supported the opposite side of Alisa.

Alisa spoke with a choked voice, trembling but holding the dark blue Glass Star in one hand.

“I want to… go out.”

“Okay.”

“Let’s do that.”

We supported Alisa like that and went outside the hospital room.

“Ali…sa?!”

“Oh my.”

“She’s awake.”

The old man and long-term patients who had been drinking alcohol with gloomy expressions in the corridor were shocked to see us, and the nurses urgently called for a doctor and disappeared somewhere.

“Where should we go, Alisa?”

“Out…side.”

“Okay.”

We moved at a very slow pace.

Gradually.

Towards the outside.

“Oh Lord.”

“Alisa?!”

“This can’t be.”

The three security guards, who had been kind only to Alisa’s parents, were surprised to see us moving down the corridor, turning their fat bodies.

A drunk ferryman.

Numerous medical chart soldiers.

Three bear security guards.

Slowly taking in the original appearances of the residents who had made up the world of death.

We opened the main entrance of the hospital where bright sunlight was coming in.

Creeeeak—

The sound of the rusty main entrance opening.

And the world familiar to us but unfamiliar to Alisa appeared.

In the sky, there was the familiar sun instead of a giant chicken.

Far away, a black bird was flying away, startled by the sound of the door opening.

The dark blue crow.

"…Hello."

The girl who had been curled up in death.

Was born into this world for the first time.

Chapter 96 : Unspoken Words

March 17

We were watching a girl's dance in Elysion.

A dark blue scythe larger than a person danced, drawing a large trajectory.

Although she was clearly the smallest girl among the magical girls in Elysion.

Her presence, dancing with a black veil fluttering under a dark blue meteor shower, was stronger than anyone else's.

Dark sky.

Dark blue mist.

The blue spring sky covered itself with dark blue mist to shield the sunlight so that the girls awakening from darkness wouldn't be dazzled.

[Death] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

World of the Dead

The dark blue crow's world of death called Tartarus.

The world Alisa first became aware of.

From there, a cold and quiet river wind blew.

Dark river water flowed into Elysion, which had been a green meadow.

The path of the dead.

The afterlife and this world were connected at the request of the magical girl granted the authority of death.

The skeleton ferryman turned his head away, pretending not to see the order at the girl's request.

The three-headed dog closed its eyes, blocking its nose that chases the dead.

Souls rushing towards the river that they can never return from.

Cobalt blue

Fluorescent green

Deep gray

Those souls slowly approached the three Glass Stars with the curse of struggle flowing like blood vessels.

At Alisa's feet, who was dancing to welcome the dead, dark blue river water rose shallowly, making a path for them to pass.

Souls wandering in the world of death.

Meeting with the starlight in the Glass Stars.

A miracle occurs.

Thousands of magical girls watching this miracle were covering their mouths and just shedding tears.

"Ugh… my, my head hurts."

"Huh? Where… is this?"

"I feel like I followed a scary light."

"Li Na?! What happened to China? The magical girl of [Sword]?!"

"Kyaaa?! Ex-explosion? Where is this?"

Hundreds of magical girls rose from the shallow water that was

faintly glowing.

After the memory of shocking death, the girls who had been sealed in the world of darkness came back to life with dark blue light.

One of the revived European magical girls, bewildered, discovered her friends crying far away and tried to walk towards them.

Splash

Splash

As she walked towards her friends, her shoes got completely wet, but she enjoyed the cool freshness of the strangely comfortable river water as she moved forward.

“Huh?! Laura? Why are you all crying? What on earth happened? What was that explosion?”

“Welcome.”

“Hm? Wh-who are you?”

“Alisa.”

“Oh… hello.”

“Hello.”

Alisa sent off the bewildered girl and looked at me with her dark blue scythe hanging down.

“Hikari… it’s over.”

“Alisa, is there anyone who couldn’t return?”

“No one who couldn’t come.”

She shook her head, wearing a black veil.

The other Alisa who appeared in the original work wore a white veil. But the switched Alisa was wearing a black veil suitable for a funeral.

“Those who didn’t come said not to call them. They said they wanted to rest.”

“…”

“There aren’t many, but I moved them so they could sleep quietly in Tartarus.”

“…Thank you.”

“No. I also received a second chance from Asya and you.”

A few magical girls who refused resurrection by their own will.

Among them were girls belonging to the Scavengers.

Alex.

Doctor.

Lee.

I had no intention of reviving the Scavengers, but they chose to sleep in the world of death from the beginning, she said.

For them, this world was full of endless chaos and madness.

After destroying themselves and others throughout their lives, they finally became true Scavengers by imprisoning themselves in emptiness and cold darkness.

‘The last remaining [Revenge] must also be burning with such unstoppable madness.’

I felt stifled even at the scene full of tears of joy and laughter.

‘…For now, let’s just congratulate them.’

The magical girl of [Penetration] who had frequented the training ground more than anyone else.

Chloe ran from far away, splashing through the dark blue river water, not minding her white skirt getting wet, to welcome her friends.

“Welcome!!”

“Whoa?! What’s this? What on earth happened! Tell me!”

“I don’t know, you idiot!! Why are you making people sad!!”

“…You’ve become a bit scary?”

“I don’t know!!”

Li Meilin was crying her throat hoarse while hugging two revived girls with long blue hair and red braided hair. The two with strikingly contrasting hair were holding the spear and sword they had been gripping until just before death to protect people.

“…Good gracious.”

“Is, is this really happening?”

“Oh… th-this is.”

Magical girls from all over the world who came to welcome the girls reborn from death.

The ordinary people who watched them reunite with tears on the dark river could only cover their mouths and keep uttering exclamations.

“Th-this is a scoop.”

“Damn… I don’t know if anyone will believe this even if I write it.”

The reporters tried to calm their trembling hands as they recorded the scene, witnessing a miracle that could only be found in myths.

‘I hope they don’t make any strange misunderstandings.’

I emphasized several times to the ordinary people who came to Elysion that this was a ritual that couldn’t be used on just anyone.

Worried that this might spread and cause fanaticism or desires towards magical girls, I also emphasized that it’s absolutely not something that can be easily accomplished.

Originally, I had planned to carry this out right on the day Alisa bloomed, but…

-No. Calm down, unnie. If we just do this like this, it'll be chaos.

-Please calm down. This is a miracle that human reason can't handle.

Due to Kang Dorim and Sumire's strong dissuasion, we were only able to carry it out after properly explaining the situation to government agencies and people several times.

Even they, who are more rational than anyone, were shocked almost to the point of fainting when they heard what I was trying to do with Alisa.

'I hope the religious community doesn't start any strange trends.'

After the fight with [Bombing] last year, I thought I would only feel a sense of achievement at this sight, as it was something I had strived to see.

Nevertheless, even I, who had worked to see this, got goosebumps at the sight of dead girls coming back to life and smiling under the warm sun.

"Your Majesty."

"Yes?"

I was startled and looked at one of the European magical girls who approached me.

She had just been revived and walked out of the river water, still wet, but she didn't seem to mind.

"Are you… are you a god?"

"…No. I'm just a magical girl too."

"I clearly remember my throat being cut by a blood-red dagger and dying. I still remember it vividly."

“It must have been a painful memory.”

“That black-clad girl who saved me said it was at Your Majesty’s request.”

“If you want to thank someone, it should be Alisa…”

Pat

She gently took my hand.

Though wet.

That hand was warm.

Like a newborn baby.

“Thank you.”

“…”

“Thank you.”

She kept saying while shedding tears.

“Thank you.”

“Thank you.”

Girls who had approached without me noticing.

They just expressed their gratitude while looking at me with reverent eyes.

And they started kneeling before me one by one.

Small waves rippled over the shallow river water due to the movements of many people.

Numerous waves approached from afar and gently tapped me.

Dozens

Hundreds

Thousands

Even those watching

Even those I know

Li Meilin

Li Na

Laura

Chloe

Ella

Even those who had encountered me several times all knelt before me and just expressed their gratitude.

‘The one who should receive thanks is Alisa.’

I was flustered by this sight and looked at Alisa, but she was already far away, chattering next to Yeonseo.

It seemed Alisa found this burdensome and left it all to me.

“This grace… I will never forget it.”

“We will follow you.”

“Th-thank you.”

“Thanks to you, I could meet my mom again.”

“We heard everything you did while we were dead.”

“Thank you for protecting my hometown.”

I was dumbfounded as I looked at the thousands of girls kneeling around me and hundreds of onlookers bowing their heads in reverence.

“…”

This is not what I want.

The dark blue riverbank where they were kneeling.

I sat down next to them and met their gaze.

My skirt was completely wet and fluttered with the ripples of the water.

At the same eye level as them.

I smiled at the magical girls who had returned from darkness.

“If you kneel, I’ll do the same.”

“But…!”

“If you suffer, I’ll feel it with you.”

“…”

I took the hand of the girl in the very front.

The girl who had greeted me first was looking at me with eyes moist with tears of gratitude.

“I’m someone who stands with you… not someone you need to submit to.”

When I conveyed my thoughts, tears finally fell from her eyes, so I wiped them with my sleeve. Then I playfully winked at Li Meilin and Laura, who I would obviously encounter often in the Grand Council.

‘Can you handle this?’

I conveyed this meaning, and they understood.

Li Meilin and Laura smiled on their tear-stained faces, seeming embarrassed that they had overreacted due to being swept up in emotions.

“Let’s just be happy today.”

“Yes…!”

Girls who came back to life, returning from the dark river.

All the magical girls who came to Elysion for them held a celebration party.

A flying island.

A festival was held for a while in the mysterious city of magical girls settled there.

Delicious food.

Noisy chatter.

Girls’ laughter.

Mysterious magic.

Time passed like a dream.

We shared the joy of reunion for a while before returning to our daily lives.

And that scene was captured by the cameras of the reporters who had come and broadcast to the whole world.

Chapter 97 : Unspoken Words

March 21

The cafe in Yokohama, <The Black Boss>, which I visited after a long time, was still peaceful.

Soft jazz music playing.

The view of Yokohama Port in the distance.

The sound of calm-colored wooden chairs.

It felt like a nostalgic scene, as if I had returned after several years.

The scent of coffee, made from freshly roasted beans left in the warehouse for ten days and then filled into the grinder every morning.

The base of Brazilian beans with a savory and stable flavor, appropriately mixed with Colombian beans to add a deep taste, spreads softly with a non-prominent aroma.

But in today's aroma, it seemed that beans with a bold fruity flavor that the Master doesn't prefer had been added little by little.

"…"

In place of the shaggy white-haired old man who used to make coffee, a girl with striking orange hair was making drinks wearing a black apron.

"Kyoko-chan! One vanilla latte for me!"

"I'll have an espresso with a little sugar."

"Yes! Got it!"

The bar where everything except the stainless steel sink was black.

The Master used to find it hard to stand for long, so he had placed a small wooden chair there.

I too had spent time sitting there during work hours for 2 years, reading newspapers or books.

The small chair was no longer visible where Kyoko was standing. Kyoko made drinks faster than me or the Master, so it seemed she had cleared away everything that interfered with her movement.

Under Kyoko's black apron, I could see the waitress uniform I used to wear in a generous size, specially shortened to suit her taste.

Thanks to her taste for somewhat bold exposure, the calm atmosphere of the uniform now felt bouncy and lively.

'It's changed quite a bit, subtly.'

The small animal dolls placed here and there in the cafe and posters of foreign rock singers were things I hadn't seen before. And the rock music heard between jazz music must also be Kyoko's taste.

Over the past 2 years, the traces of me and the Master were gradually disappearing from the scenery I had seen, and it was changing to Kyoko's taste.

I knew this was the process of Kyoko's dream coming true and evidence that we were moving towards our own paths. But on the other hand, I also felt a bit regretful.

"Oh? Leader? What brings you here?"

"Just came to say hello. Are you still living at Master's house?"

"Yes, I am! We come to work together too!"

"I see… Is Master here? I don't see him."

"Yes! He's sitting on that bench over there. He's mostly there these days."

“Okay, thanks.”

Kyoko laughed and then moved her hands deftly again to make the drinks the customers had asked for.

With her cute appearance and cheerful way of speaking, she was loved by many customers.

The customers seemed to order with more excited expressions than they had with me and the Master, who had given off a somewhat gloomy atmosphere.

Leaving that scene behind, I walked towards the bench at the back of the store where the seaside was visible.

The place where I used to sit and think whenever I had important concerns.

There, an old gentleman who now looked frail enough to seem precarious even from a girl’s perspective was sitting.

The Master, puffing on a cigar with a fragrant but strong tobacco smoke, was sitting absentmindedly on the bench.

“I’m here.”

“Oh, you came.”

“You’re not surprised.”

“What do you mean?”

The Master smiled faintly, took the cigar out of his mouth, extinguished it, and put it in a small leather pouch.

I knew that cigars lose their aroma rapidly if stopped in the middle of smoking. Moreover, it was an expensive cigar befitting the Master’s refined taste.

“…You can keep smoking.”

“It’s fine. More importantly, what brings you here?”

“I just wanted to see you.”

“Then you’ve seen me now, so that’s that.”

“…Actually, I was a magical girl.”

“I know. These days the news is all about some goddess appearing and miracles happening.”

“I’m actually working to save this world.”

“I know. Didn’t you say that loudly on that strange island?”

We sat for a while on the bench in the shade, looking at the seaside visible in the distance.

The still slightly chilly spring breeze blew, pushing the waves, and white foam appeared and disappeared on the water, tangling messily.

“Hikari.”

“Yes.”

“You’re doing well.”

“…”

“Even with such power, you don’t give up on being human.”

“Of course. I’m trying to live helping others, just like you did, Master.”

“I see.”

The day I first came to this world.

Because of the kindness I received from him, the seed that my father from my previous life had engraved in my heart sprouted.

The tree in my heart, bloomed by two fathers, was still growing even at this moment.

The Master had a complex expression after hearing my words.

“Hikari.”

“Yes?”

“The name of my daughter who died in an accident.”

“…”

“When she was young, she wanted to become a cafe owner. She said she wanted to create a place where her dad, who only traveled abroad in a black suit because of business, could come and rest.”

A name that didn’t even appear in the original work.

In the original work, the Master only told Yuki, who had approached him, that his daughter had died.

“When I first saw you that day, I thought you were some girl who had heard a rumor somewhere and came to tease me. The same name. My goodness.”

“…I didn’t know.”

“Yes. You seemed like that. You looked too sad to be coming to play a prank.”

“…”

“It felt like fate somehow.”

“…”

“I was thinking of quietly ending my life here, but living with you, who constantly caused trouble and asked for favors, was fun.”

That rainy day.

We met in the incomprehensible flow of the world.

“Even if you curse me for giving you the attention I couldn’t give my dead daughter in life, I felt a little at ease in that.”

“It’s not cowardly. We live to become better than yesterday, right?”

“Thank you.”

It wasn’t just me who was comforted by this world that day.

We were comforted by meeting each other.

“Go now. I hear there’s a commotion in places like China because dead kids are coming back to life.”

“…These days there are even people saying they want to worship me as a god.”

“Puhahahaha!! You, who destroyed an espresso machine? You, who burned a whole bag of batter trying to make pancakes? Khup! Pfft.”

“Aren’t you laughing too much?”

“Huhahahahaha!! Why don’t you ask them to build a statue or something?”

“I’m in the process of constantly refusing that too.”

I felt various considerations in that laughter.

Even if I wake the dead and use god-like powers, the Master would probably treat me the same.

To him, I’m just a troublemaking part-timer with the same name as his daughter.

“Master.”

“Yes?”

“Let’s go to Elysion together.”

“Let’s do that.”

I was surprised by that refreshing answer and stared blankly at the Master for a while.

The Master saw me like that and chuckled, patting my shoulder.

“Is it because you’re worried about me being here?”

“…Yes.”

“Thank you. Then let’s go together.”

“What about the cafe? I didn’t think you’d answer so quickly…”

“I was planning to hand over the store to Kyoko soon anyway, since she’s turning 18 this year. Honestly, she’s running it better than me now.”

The Master, who casually dropped the shocking fact that Kyoko was older than Ichika, looked up at the sky while sitting on the bench.

“Hikari, thank you.”

Which Hikari was he thanking?

After introducing people who could advise Kyoko, who had suddenly become the owner of an antique house and a sophisticated cafe, the Master packed his bags cleanly and came to Elysion.

And in Elysion, with the help of magical girls, a small cafe was created in just a few days.

＜The White Goddess＞

A crudely attached sign on a rustic wooden building with decorations brought from Europe.

In the modest cafe using white ready-made cups instead of luxury porcelain, golden-eyed magical girls always came and went.

For those who had been sealed on the closed island, a cafe where they could spend time drinking tea and coffee seemed both unfamiliar and shocking.

Looking around the small cafe full of wood scent, golden-haired and golden-eyed girls were sitting closely together, waiting for drinks and food, and an old man could be seen leisurely making drinks inside the rustic wooden bar.

Ding

The door opens and another golden girl enters.

A girl so nervous that she moves her arms and legs together while fidgeting.

The Master burst into laughter, finding her appearance adorable.

“Welcome.”

“One, one special lunch set, please!”

“Please sit over there and wait. It’ll be out soon.”

“W-wow! I want to bring some for the Divine Maiden too!”

“The Divine Maiden is only drinking water because she says her mouth doesn’t move…”

The Divine Maiden had been out for a month and then fell ill to form the foundation of the ‘Moirai Plan’ proposed by Kang Dorim.

To create and spread a huge network of domains connecting the whole world by combining my, Alisa’s, and the Divine Maiden’s domains, not just in the shape of enclosing land, she had traveled around the world riding the high-speed transport ship Pollux.

-…Successor, give me rest.

-Let’s try a little more.

I heard that the work became even more difficult due to the crowds of people who witnessed numerous miracles and became excited wherever the silver ship passed.

“Enjoy your meal.”

“Wow! Photo! Photo!”

“Master! Please hold it for a moment!”

Click

Click

Numerous golden girls taking photos with smartphones, the first thing they mastered from the outside world. The Master burst into laughter once again seeing them flustered and marveling at everything in the cafe.

“Hahahahaha!”

I was watching this sitting in a corner of the cafe.

There were still too many meetings and connections left to conclude his life.

Chapter 98 : Unspoken Words

March 24

“How is it?”

“It’s pretty.”

“Which… which one?”

“That cherry blossom tree next to the utility pole over there is the biggest and most impressive.”

“…”

The cherry blossoms fluttering in the gentle spring breeze were beautiful.

Yuki and I were slowly walking among the cherry blossom trees that had dyed the streets pink in the warm spring sunlight.

Despite Yuki’s hundreds of messages worrying that yesterday’s spring rain might have washed away all the cherry blossoms, all the cherry blossom trees were swaying their entire bodies, showering pink petals.

News came that hundreds of high-ranking officials from various European countries and China wanted to visit Elysion due to the numerous touching stories that Laura and Li Meilin couldn’t help but convey out of emotion.

I hastily fled after hearing from Yeonseo that there were people among these surprise visitors who dreamed of idolizing me, but having nowhere else to go except Elysion, I came to where Yuki’s house was.

-Wait a moment! I’ll, I’ll change into my school uniform and come!

Even though the start of school was just around the corner.

Yuki insisted on changing into her high school uniform and coming out.

Although we were just going for a walk in front of the house, I went along with Yuki's desire to show a more grown-up appearance by wearing her high school uniform even a day earlier.

'She'll wear it plenty when the time comes anyway.'

At first, Yuki struggled with the daily life in the returned time. But she gradually started to look forward to the daily life beyond middle school that she was experiencing for the first time.

The lost daily life and memories.

She seemed to depend a lot on me, who knew everything, as compensation psychology for the fights she had endured, unable to die due to the mission left by the goddess of [Beginning].

Whenever I saw Yuki like that, I felt a tightness in one corner of my heart and thought that this time I really wanted to save everyone.

I wanted to give a future as big as the unrewarded happiness to the wonderful protagonist I had admired.

"Yuki."

"Yes?"

"Is it still hard for you to see Lihua, Natalia, and Yeonseo?"

"…Yes."

Yuki's companions from the original work were getting along like friends after meeting each other in different ways in the changed time. Among them, only Yuki remained unchanged and stuck.

Painful times.

Unsympathetic companions.

Yet they fought together and died.

For Yuki, they who were living in a completely changed time were complete strangers and uncomfortable remnants of the past.

“…”

“…”

In the wind blowing cherry blossom petals.

I looked at Yuki’s eyes tinged with red.

Yuki looked at my narrow eyes.

Although we haven’t known each other for long.

Because we know better than anyone else what each other has gone through.

We were silently answering and refusing each other’s words with our eyes.

Plop

Suddenly, a cherry blossom petal fell on Yuki’s head. I removed it for her, and Yuki quietly looked at me.

The petal in my hand.

That petal looked lonely, like me who had fallen into this world, and suddenly I had something to say.

“Yuki.”

“Yes, Hikari.”

“Actually, I was Korean in my previous life.”

Yuki’s eyes slowly widened at my sudden words.

“Really? I had no idea…”

“Yes, but it’s a different Korea from the one here in this world.”

“A different Korea?”

“The president is different, and the history is a bit different, but the atmosphere is frighteningly the same.”

“I see. Was it hard for you?”

“No.”

“Why? There’s no one you want to see there, and no place you want to return to.”

“Instead, there were Kang Dorim, Team Leader Oh, Park Saebyeok, Hong Nayeon, the beef bone soup restaurant owner, and the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team and White Wing Unit.”

A place so familiar yet…

So different.

A different Korea in this world.

Where there’s no mother.

No father’s grave.

No familiar brands.

No university I attended.

“When I first arrived in Korea in this world, I was scared because it was so familiar yet strange.”

“Yes.”

“But there were good people I didn’t know living in a familiar atmosphere.”

“Yes.”

“Although the things I cherished weren’t there, I found other precious

things.”

“Yes.”

Yuki quietly held out her hand, realizing what I wanted to say as she looked into my eyes. And I slowly took that hand.

Fingers intertwining from the pinky, gradually wrapping around each other.

Warmth

Heat

A cherry blossom petal mixed in between our palms, but we didn’t let go.

Sometimes when we agreed with each other without speaking, we held hands like this.

“Even weak me overcame it, so Yuki can definitely overcome it too.”

“No, I’m not that strong.”

“Then what should we do?”

“…You should hold my other hand too.”

“Shall I?”

I laughed because our appearance, standing in the middle of the road holding both hands, looked so funny.

It seemed like some suspicious religious ritual, staring intently at each other while holding hands amidst falling cherry blossom petals. What’s more, I, who was performing it, was about to become the goddess of a pseudo-religion.

My mother said not to join a pseudo-religion even if she died, so what should I do if I end up becoming one.

“Pfft.”

“Hehe.”

We laughed for a moment and then started moving forward on the path we were on.

“Then.”

“Yes?”

Yuki opened her mouth with a slightly trembling voice.

“Then I’ll try meeting them too.”

Chen Lihua, Natalia, Cho Yeonseo.

A determination to find other precious things in a familiar atmosphere in the changed time.

“Like you did, Hikari. I’ll try meeting them again too.”

“Yes. You thought well.”

“Phew… now that I’ve decided, I’m nervous.”

“That’s how it usually is when you make a decision.”

Yuki didn’t answer that, quietly smiling, and then suddenly pulled the hand she was holding and said:

“Come to think of it, it’s strange.”

“What is?”

“My dad used to love Korean dramas a lot in the past.”

“Ah… I think I know what you mean.”

It must have been a drama about amnesia or something.

“So when I was young, I apparently said I wanted to go backpacking in Korea when I grew up because of my dad.”

“Really?”

“Maybe it’s because Korean dramas were always on TV.”

Yuki spoke Korean with an awkward pronunciation, saying ‘Annyeongha-se-yo! Ban-ga-seu-mi-da.’ (Hello! Nice to meet you.)

I smiled slightly because it was so cute.

“You’re doing well.”

“Hehe, it was one of my few party tricks when I was young.”

“What are the other tricks?”

“I forgot because I had no friends to show them to.”

“…”

I recalled the tragedy that befell the girl who had dreamed of going backpacking abroad.

Bullying due to burns.

“…”

“Now that I have a friend, I should practice a lot.”

“Yes.”

“Ah, we’re in front of the house now.”

Before we knew it, we had come back after going around the neighborhood once.

Just over that hill is where the Shikishima father and daughter live.

“Want to… go around once more?”

Yuki asked, glancing at me, but I shook my head because I had something prepared.

“I see.”

Dejected

It seemed like letters appeared above Yuki's head, but it couldn't be helped.

Because the friends she could show her party tricks to had arrived.

"Oh! They're here! Your Majesty!"

"Welcome!"

"Hello, Miss Shikishima."

Chen Lihua, Natalia, and Cho Yeonseo arrived in front of the Shikishima house carrying lunch boxes.

I had asked Yeonseo to come here, and she gladly brought Chen Lihua and Natalia with her.

It was difficult to bring Natalia, the transport manager who played an important role in the 'Moirai Plan' of connecting the network of domains across the world. Yeonseo quickly went and brought her during the pause caused by the Divine Maiden's collapse.

'Thank you, Divine Maiden. But let's hang in there a bit more.'

The girls, visiting Japan for the first time, came in comfortable clothes and were taking pictures or looking around near the Shikishima house. Especially Chen Lihua enjoyed exploring here and there, constantly touching things like mailboxes and vending machines, observing the differences from Taiwan.

Yuki muttered with wide eyes as she watched them.

"Eh…?! Lihua, Natasha, Asya…"

"Oh! You're already calling us so familiarly!"

"H-how did you come all the way here?!"

"Because Her Majesty called us!"

Yuki looked at me in surprise at Chen Lihua's answer, but I pretended not to notice.

“Did everyone bring something to eat?”

“Yes!”

“Alisa baked some cookies, please try them!”

Inside the lunchbox that Yeonseo gently opened were snacks that the magical girls living in Elysion had packed for us.

“Yuki.”

“Yes?”

“Now that everyone’s here, let’s go around once more.”

“…Okay!”

The main characters of ＜Magical Girl HAZARD＞.

Comrades who sometimes conflicted and cooperated, watching each other’s backs.

They abandoned even their beliefs and conformed to reality in the face of endless irrationality.

Nevertheless, they didn’t mock Yuki’s dream.

Even if Yuki’s dream was absurd and fleeting, they didn’t deny that it had clearly become a hope to endure today.

“We might see more good places if we go around a second time, right?”

Perhaps understanding the meaning in my question,

Yuki answered in a very loud voice.

“Yes! We’ll be able to see even better scenery!”

We sat on a bench we discovered in a corner of the cherry blossom tree path we went around for the second time, sharing snacks and enjoying a pleasant time together.

Chapter 99 : Unspoken Words

March 28

“So I’ve become an older sister, Hikari-chan!”

“Congratulations, Hana-chan.”

Because Sato Hana had made many friends including me, she had been going on adventures between her shabby apartment, Kyoko’s house, and Elysion since last December. During that time, the Sato couple, who were able to spend intense time together, finally conceived their second child.

Upon hearing this news, Hana came all the way to Elysion, crossing the warp gate in one step, to tell me.

‘We still don’t know if it’s a girl or a boy.’

For some reason, Hana seemed certain that the baby in her mother’s womb was a little sister.

Even if a little brother is born, I don’t think Hana would be disappointed, but listening to Hana speak with such strong conviction made me think that perhaps a little sister might really be born as if by fate.

Hana, who had awakened to 2-star after receiving numerous dreams, was rejoicing with her eyes wide open, sparkling with yellow stars, even though she wasn’t transformed.

Around her, the trio of golden girls who had somehow come to follow Hana like a leader were congratulating her.

“Congratulations, Hana!”

“Congratulations!”

“You’re becoming an older sister now!”

“Heheh! Thank you!”

“But how are babies made?”

“The goddess of [Beginning] carves starlight to make them! Silly Sylph!”

“Ah, I see.”

Magical girls gathered around Hana, who was shrugging her shoulders, sprinkling golden energy and blessing her.

Echo, Daphne, Sylph.

The magical girl of [Resonance] who controls sound.

The magical girl of [Vitality] who infuses vigor.

The magical girl of [Wind] who controls air currents.

They were all bloomed born 2-star magical girls from the island who used powerful abilities.

“…”

Although most of the dozens of golden magical girls who had been sealed on the island were gentle and fond of others, they were especially friendly to Hana, the magical girl of [Swiftness], and Himari, the magical girl of [Nursing], as if they were from the same hometown.

What could be the reason why the last survivors of the first humans were so friendly to them?

I was curious about this and asked Iris, the magical girl of [Wing] who was the representative of the island girls, but she said she didn’t know either.

-I can only say that… familiar starlight flows through them.

In the end, I could only hear the full story from the Divine Maiden,

who was regaining her strength by drinking grape juice through a hose in her mouth.

-It's because they received a fragment closer to the goddess's essence than the heart of the goddess's remains… weaker than the heart and smaller than the apostles.

Loving others

Being admired by others

Changing others

In fact, in the case of Himari, the magical girl of [Nursing], such an explanation made sense.

After all, she was leading a massive magical girl volunteer organization called the Relief Corps, which had grown to nearly a thousand members by absorbing even magical girls from other countries, and she herself showed tremendous abilities.

Except for Dorim and Ichika who bloomed in extreme situations, she was one of the two girls closest to full blooming.

Himari was now exerting an enormous presence, receiving treatment above ministerial level wherever she visited any country.

'But Hana…'

A yellow Glass Star, dimmer than golden.

What kind of fate did she have, who had spent her entire childhood bedridden at home because she couldn't use her lower body after injuring her nerves falling down stairs while chasing a butterfly when she was young?

"…"

A thought suddenly crossed my mind.

Among the three goddesses' curses, there was one that 'twists the fate of girls with dreams.'

In reality, there were girls like the salon members following Sumire, whose original dreams and situations had become impossibly distant.

If

Just if

In the past years when the goddess of [Beginning] threw herself. In that past when the three goddesses' curses flowed in together.

If Sato Hana, who should have shone as brightly as Himari now, originally had some great fate, but completely lost her dream due to that curse.

If the remnants that were completely crushed and shattered by the three goddesses were so distantly brilliant that Hana, who started from a single starlight, shines so brilliantly now.

"…"

"So you see! Hikari-chan!"

"Uh, yes?"

Grasp

Two warm hands pulled me out of my chilling imagination.

"This time I'm going to have a celebration party at home with Echo, Daphne, and Sylph!"

"…I see."

"Can I take them?"

"Sure. Have a good time."

I smiled and nodded to the three girls looking at me with expectant eyes.

Having received my permission, the golden girls cheered with joy, holding each other's hands and jumping up and down.

‘They can freely come and go using the warp gate anyway, but they ask for my permission every time.’

As Elysion was currently flying across the Pacific towards Asia for the ‘Moirai Plan’, magical girls and ordinary people planning to disembark in Asia were busily packing their bags.

“People are trying to get off.”

“Hana! Let’s quickly get gifts before it gets crowded!”

“Can’t we just go leisurely if we ask Iris?”

“Stupid Sylph! Don’t bother Iris.”

“Then I’ll be going, Hikari-chan!”

I waved to Hana as she said this.

The four girls, including Sato Hana, ran energetically towards the center of Elysion, saying they would choose gifts to bring to the celebration party.

“…”

Awakened 2-star magical girl of [Swiftness].

A girl who pioneered her own starlight.

A girl blessed while helping numerous people.

The current Hana was by no means insignificant.

I was proud of the paths Hana had pioneered now, perhaps more than the great fate that might have been given to her.

“Unnie.”

“Dorim.”

Turning around at the sound of Dorim’s voice from behind, I saw her approaching with other magical girls who had conceived the Moirai Plan together.

“Unnie, the preparations are done now.”

“…I see.”

“You’re going to meet that person soon, right?”

“Yes.”

“You need to be careful.”

“Of course.”

The Moirai Plan.

Like the names of the three goddesses who spin the threads of fate, spread the domains created by the three apostles like thin bands around the world.

The silver structures that Elysion and the Pollux had been launching around the world over the past few months became a huge band connecting around the Earth like a fence.

Rose garden

Gray glass castle

Bamboo forest

Wheat field

My domain reflecting the mental images of the Grand Council magical girls.

The Divine Maiden’s domain spread across major cities in the United States.

Alisa’s domain spread across major cities in Russia.

Only after gathering the domains expanded by the two fully bloomed girls did it reach the minimum scale to complete the huge band by surrounding the silver structures with a thin domain.

All domains were dismantled and spread as a huge thread covering

the entire human world.

Like a retaining wall encircling a globe, it can protect magical girls by breaking free from the constraints of place, connected to a huge ring linking the sky, not the land.

This was the first rebellion interpreting the rules of <Magical Girl HAZARD> defined by the goddess in a human way, and it was a method recognized worldwide because the magical girls had established authority through numerous miracles.

Now, no matter what [War] does, no matter how many demons swarm the world.

The apostles will protect the magical girls as a band in the sky, not on land.

“Is it properly connected to Elysion’s kaleidoscope?”

“Yes. Now we can deploy immediately while viewing scenes from around the world anytime.”

“That’s a relief.”

The goddess’s eye created by the three successors left by the goddess of [Beginning].

A fence created by connecting the three apostles who originally couldn’t come together.

Now spatial constraints are meaningless for magical girls.

“Reviving from death consumes a lot of mental energy… but isn’t this almost an immortal army? A superhuman army backed by infinitely emerging resources from a moving fortress.”

“Dorim, don’t say things like that. I have no intention of conquering others.”

“Well, I thought you’d say that, unnie.”

It’s not perfect preparation, but at least we won’t be helplessly

overwhelmed by [War].

Infinite army.

Endless summoning of heroes.

Her power is mighty.

We could finish all preparations perfectly while waiting for her to come with the first trial, but.

-It would be good to have a conversation with the brown cat.

The final advice left by the dark blue crow.

I prepared for all threats to carry this out.

“Team Leader Oh isn’t coming to Elysion?”

“Yeah, it seems the uncle just wants to stay in Korea.”

“I see. Please take good care of Korea.”

Dorim let out a snicker at those words, as if finding them absurd, and raised her slender arm to her waist.

“It was my homeland to begin with, you know? I turned it into an invincible fortress even while carrying out the Moirai Plan.”

“Right. Thank you.”

“Oh, by the way. The magical girl of [Sea] sent you a letter from the training center.”

“Huh? Nayeon? Why? Wasn’t she in training?”

Rustle

In one corner of the paper Dorim handed over, there was a drawing of a short-haired demon giving a disgusting thumbs up.

Unfolding that paper, only two words remained among traces of something written all over and roughly erased with a ballpoint pen.

-Save me.

Hong Nayeon, who is undergoing rigorous training with Yi Minseul, the leader of the 1st Platoon in charge of combat, as a trainee until she is commissioned as a second lieutenant. I heard she enlisted in the White Wing Company because of the business card I gave her.

“What does it say?”

“She says she’s doing well.”

“I see.”

I put that letter away and went around checking everything in Elysion until our final conversation.

Chapter 100 : Declaration of War

＜Certificate of Degree Conferral＞

-Degree: Doctoral Degree

“…”

Emily stood blankly in front of the station in Manchester at sunset, holding a single piece of paper.

‘It’s over.’

Now she had done everything she wanted to do.

It’s time to prepare to hand over her body to the superior inner being, waiting.

Not despair or frustration about her remaining time, but an objective assessment of her condition.

There was still some time left until the fateful day, but she was starting to feel like she was walking in a dream as her consciousness was gradually mixing with that of Animus, the magical girl of [War].

Some days she spent completely lost in sleep, and on others, she barely noticed leaks in her monstrous memory that never forgot anything once seen.

Emily was slowly dying. And the magical girl of [War] was being born based on the world she had seen.

A perception that sees everything, including herself, as victory and defeat.

A fool who merely affirms all emotions… joy, sadness, pain.

A madwoman who believes the most intense moments of life are in struggle.

A monster who has never lived truly with emotions.

While respecting the resolute Animus who dreamed of grand causes, she sometimes imagined what it would have been like if she had gone to another girl instead of herself.

But it was already too late.

“Animus.”

[…]

“Don’t you hate me? Because of me, you…”

[No.]

“Why? Everyone says my thoughts are strange when they hear them in detail.”

[Because I agree.]

“Hehe, thank you.”

[An apostle descending upon a madwoman understood by no one.]

“…”

[That is me. At least I affirm you.]

I affirm all humans.

I affirm the sins they committed.

I affirm the endlessly repeated struggles.

I affirm all fights.

Advance.

Do not stop struggling.

The end of humanity is not brought about by the whims of gods or the will of stars.

[Human evolution will also be achieved through their own chaos and fighting spirit. That was humanity's past.]

"…"

[I will believe it to be more right than those who deny their scarred past in order to move forward.]

"If even a single handful of human will remains, continuing from the past."

[That will be humanity's victory.]

A girl answered the voice that had grown loud enough to spread faintly around Emily.

"I can't agree with that."

[Is that so.]

When Emily turned around.

The silver girl she had seen sometime before was standing there.

* * *

Only after experiencing everything could I finally understand the thoughts of the magical girl of [War].

She was certainly loving humanity in a very cruel and consequentialist way.

"Is it because of the mistake of the goddess of [Beginning]?"

[That's right.]

The goddess of [Beginning] who only wanted all humans to be eternally happy in dreams.

The first humans suffered in happiness and led themselves to an imperfect world.

In the imperfect world, they fought and struggled endlessly, advancing forward. Humanity clearly blazed brilliantly after leaving the embrace of the gods.

[The mistake the goddess made was not showing the purpose of living for tomorrow.]

“That’s meaningless now. Humanity has already changed from back then.”

[No. Human history has extended from that huge explosion of starlight.]

“What’s wrong with overcoming the past and changing?”

[That is not overcoming, but escaping. They have fled into the remnants of the goddess.]

“…”

[…]

The magical girl of [War] and I were just running parallel lines.

Me, trying to use the legacy left by the goddess to go to a better future.

[War], trying to adapt humanity to a new world through their own evolution.

The delicate fragments of dreams that I worry about dropping even a little were nothing but junk to be discarded for survival to the magical girl of [War].

If the strategic objective of this war is the preservation of humanity, then issues like the survival of all humanity and the proper growth of magical girls were not worth caring about.

[Only after pulling infinite resources down to finite did humanity

evolve to the next stage.]

[The way for humanity to not completely disappear while avoiding the curses of the three goddesses in the coming trials.]

[It is only through overcoming it themselves through struggle.]

[I affirm that figure writhing and crawling on the ground, surviving like insects.]

Because she was the only one who affirmed humanity in a world where goddesses and apostles were indifferent, the magical girl of [War] drove humanity into chaos more fiercely than anyone.

To sort out the very few humans who learned new ways of life through struggle.

“It’s different now. Because I’m here.”

[You too are nothing but a remnant of the goddess.]

“I’m a son who has run to change, and a daughter born to change. I’m a magical girl.”

[What is a magical girl?]

“A girl who protects everyone with dreams and hope.”

[…]

I deny the apostle who was the only one to look at humanity in the world before it changed.

I deny the magical girl who was the only one among all magical girls to affirm even sins.

I will change the world and twist even the unreasonable curses of the gods.

Because this world has already changed because of me.

[Do you intend to save humanity from the will of the three goddesses and the stars?]

“Yes.”

[What kind of apostle are you?]

“A stranger called from another universe by the goddess of [Beginning]. A guest who came to love this world.”

[So you weren’t an apostle.]

“My alias is [Deception]. One who carries on the lie the goddess told to save humanity.”

[…]

“An uninvited guest who peeked at the future of this world.”

Emily’s eyes were already clouded, and only the magical girl of [War] and I were facing each other in the quiet square.

Our two shadows, lengthened by the sunset, faced each other without overlapping.

She, who had been silent for a long time in the gradually setting sun, looked up at the sky for a moment.

The throne of nothingness.

The exile of the three goddesses.

The three goddesses don’t care about the evolution ritual left by the goddess of [Beginning].

They only wish for humanity to completely destroy itself.

[Then prove it.]

“Prove what?”

[Prove that I’m wrong through war.]

“Is there no way to do this without fighting?”

The magical girl of [War] shook her head.

[My essence is chaos cursed by the goddess. Chaos to mix everything and move on to the next.]

“…”

[The only thing I can give you, who has persuaded two apostles and seen the future, is trial.]

“Trial?”

[On the day the apostle descends. I will unconditionally advance to the land where the goddess’s remains fell.]

Japan

Shinjuku

[I will attack with everything I have, giving up all rights, pouring out all my power.]

“Why are you telling me this?”

[Because both you and I are thinking about the future of humanity.]

“It would be better for humanity’s future if we cooperated instead of fighting.”

[Don’t you know it’s already impossible?]

Scavengers.

There were already many who were hurt by the chaos she had unleashed before she knew me.

If we clumsily choose coexistence, everyone might scatter.

Even if we coexist, she will unhesitatingly drive humanity into chaos through radical means.

Because that’s how the magical girl of [War] loves humanity.

Because she couldn’t give up on herself because she loves humanity.

[Stop me with all your might. Defeat me. I will advance to conquer, not to flee.]

If I win, she will acknowledge that she was wrong and disappear.

If she wins, she will implement her method to preserve humanity.

"…"

[…]

This was a contract between me and [War], and a play to deceive the three goddesses tied to the throne.

However, the sword appearing in the play will be real.

[If you cannot even surpass me, your words will be nothing but empty.]

"Why are you going this far?"

[Magical girls are…]

But the magical girl of [War] couldn't continue her words and firmly closed her mouth.

I instinctively realized that this moment was the only moment of compromise.

Even if I tried to annihilate [War] right now by leading Elysion and surrounding her with thousands of magical girls, with her abilities, she would break through the encirclement and escape.

And what I would face would be the sight of the utterly disappointed magical girl of [War] advancing while deploying all measures to stop me.

Trust that can be obtained only once.

A battlefield excluding all strategies and deceptions.

The greatest consideration the strongest apostle, [War], could give me.

Declaration of war

“Alright.”

[Prepare thoroughly during the remaining time.]

“Is that something to say to an enemy?”

[Hostile relationships were also a way of human interaction.]

The sunset had completely passed, and darkness came.

“…”

“…”

The magical girl of [War] disappeared, and Emily returned.

I spoke to the girl sharing thoughts with the apostle, remembering Alisa.

“I still can’t agree with your thoughts either.”

“I know.”

“I’m going to save everyone and make them happy.”

“I see.”

“I’ll lead everyone with dreams, not victory or defeat.”

Emily took off her glasses and showed a sad face for the first time.

Even that was just awkward and empty somewhere.

“I’m envious. Really.”

“…”

“But I still think Animus’s thoughts are more right.”

“…”

“…It’s a shame I can’t see the end. Still, I want to cheer for Animus.”

I turned around without saying anything.

A girl who affirms the apostle even while throwing herself away.

An apostle who believes that plunging humanity into chaos is salvation.

I didn’t want to argue about victory or defeat with them.

What I want is tomorrow.

And so, three months passed.

Chapter 101 : Magical Girl HAZARD

June 6, 2012

On a slightly hot early summer day.

The Shibuya Scramble Crossing in Tokyo was filled with girls with solemn expressions.

The fateful day.

Numerous magical girls gathered there.

[Activating the Threads of Fate Protocol!]

“Activating the Threads of Fate Protocol!”

Huge lines spread like spider webs across the blue sky.

Threads of hope connected to the surface of the stars where humanity has lived and which seek to eliminate humanity.

The massive threads created by the three apostles connected with magical girls around the world, becoming both a shelter and a passage.

Numerous footsteps going back and forth at the scene.

Radio communications of administrative magical girls.

Sounds of magical girls doing final checks on their abilities.

“Connection with the Council confirmed.”

“We can go to the domain anytime.”

“Please report connection status from other regions as well.”

[Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team connection confirmed!]

[Bright Moon connection confirmed.]

[European Union connection confirmed.]

[Free Magical Girl Federation connection confirmed!]

[Russian Relief Union connection confirmed.]

[Southeast Asian Dispatch Team connection confirmed.]

[Middle East Dispatch Team connection confirmed.]

After that, endless connection confirmation reports continued, along with voice messages being transmitted from silver ships floating in the skies around the world to the Elysion observatory.

[Sirius standing by!]

[Pollux standing by.]

[Vega… standing by.]

[Castor standby complete!]

[Altair standing by.]

Numerous silver transport ships carrying combat magical girls were circling in the skies above Shinjuku.

The magical girls waiting inside the transport ships, fully prepared to be deployed at any moment, were listening intently to the radio.

“Do it properly like we trained. Don’t be nervous.”

“Company commander, you seem the most nervous of all.”

“…If you use your body recklessly thinking you’ll come back to life even if you die, I’ll kill you myself.”

“What if civilians are in danger?”

“Then you have to throw your body in.”

Relay ships acting as intermediate base stations that can connect to the Threads of Fate and transport magical girls at any time.

“The distance between Bright Moon and the Southeast Asian team is too far. Please move as far south as possible from Bright Moon’s side.”

[If we disperse personnel any further, it will be impossible to maintain even the minimum combat units.]

“Then please hold out on Bright Moon’s side while being aware of the range of the Threads of Fate activation.”

[Understood. We’ll fight while maintaining distance adjustment as much as possible.]

“We’ll make sure to receive real-time activation range updates.”

Just one day.

There was a girl who had saved and guided magical girls for just one properly prepared day of battle.

“Captain Himari! The combat unit is ready!”

“How is the security team doing?”

“Tsugumi said she’d go around taking care of people who couldn’t evacuate in time.”

A day that once came without any warning.

A day they couldn’t properly face due to the curses of the three goddesses and human greed.

“Boss, we can go anytime.”

“We’ll follow you. Miss.”

“We’ll go join up in Shinjuku now.”

The day all tragedies began.

Perhaps the day humanity’s fate was decided.

“Captain! Just leave the rear to us!”

“You just hide behind me. Kyoko.”

A battlefield barely created through numerous miracles and deceptions.

“Daphne! Sylph! Echo! We’re going to save people who couldn’t escape in time!”

“Okay! Hana! Leave it to us! I’ll blow them all away with sound waves!”

“Ugh, I’m scared.”

“Stupid Sylph.”

Girls who had gathered after finally unraveling numerous threads of fate.

“Hikari.”

“Yuki.”

“Let’s definitely win.”

“Okay.”

Two girls who had run from the past and future to see only this moment.

Where one girl had stood blankly in a shabby appearance drenched by rain.

Where one girl had lost everything due to a foolish runaway.

All our stories began there.

The true beginning of ＜Magical Girl HAZARD＞.

A special scenery different from usual.

12 o’clock noon.

The sky turned red.

* * *

I waited for this day.

I hoped this day would never come.

Contradictory emotions.

3 years ago, I woke up here as a weak girl who could only rely on others.

1 year ago, I watched here as the weakest apostle who had not yet realized her power.

And today.

To face the magical girl of [War], the strongest apostle.

To see the second red broadcast that is the beginning of destruction.

For this world that I came to love.

To return to my mother.

I returned to this place.

“Come.”

I am here.

In the center of the vast city where numerous citizens should be passing by, only magical girls who had come out to face the trial were standing on the streets.

The sky that should be no different from usual.

The blue sky that should have shone with the hot early summer sunlight had turned red due to the will of the stars seeking to destroy humans and the curses of the three goddesses combined to plunge humanity into the brink of destruction.

Black energy was gathering and swirling in the red sky.

The malice of goddesses and stars towards humans was gathering and wriggling to create a form.

[…]

Silence

The goddess's announcement that should have started as soon as the sky turned red was not heard, and only a chilling silence continued.

[…You deceived us.]

[…You tricked us.]

[…You fooled us.]

The three goddesses no longer spoke in mocking voices.

What could be felt was anger.

[The daughter of the world deceived us.]

[The first daughter tricked us all.]

[She fooled the fate of humanity.]

The deception prepared by the goddess of [Beginning] was supposed to be smaller, but it became a massive rebellion shot towards the goddesses by one human.

Even so.

I declared in the name of the goddess.

Because I wanted to give the leading role of the miracle to the first magical girl.

“That’s right. You were deceived by the first goddess. This was a ritual for humanity to survive while keeping their dreams.”

In response to my answer, I felt enormous presences from beyond the sky gazing at me through the faintly opened dimensional gap.

Even though it was clearly just a passage that couldn’t properly take shape, the weight of the curse flowing from there was heavy.

Huge beings who couldn’t understand humans that were too small and weak when alone, and only recognized them as the sum total of humanity.

Beings who had not paid attention to anything except the will of the stars now felt hostility towards me.

Due to my existence, the will of humanity fully faced the trials and the beings that were once goddesses.

And we finally recognized each other.

[…]

[…]

[…]

An enormous presence that made my limbs go numb and felt like it was pressing down on my shoulders.

An enormous presence that made it feel like a small human would be blown away like a piece of paper.

“Kugh?!”

Even Yuki standing next to me staggered as her legs gave out for a moment, and the ground began to crack under the gaze with such an enormous presence.

Rumble—

The earth I was standing on cracked due to the curse.

I ignored the pouring malice and curses and stepped forward one step at a time.

Passing by numerous magical girls, to the very front.

So that no one would be hurt by the goddesses' curses.

"Kyaa?!"

"Ugh… I don't feel good."

"Earthquake…? The ground is shaking."

Although they were not as forgotten as the goddess of [Beginning] who had been exiled for tens of thousands of years, the malice and curses poured out by these beings who had been forgotten for thousands of years were enough to wound this fleeting world.

But there's no need to be afraid.

If the will of humanity wants to break free from the gods of the past, they cannot appear here directly.

Like weak humans, they can only sit in their seats and curse their opponents.

I have no intention of calling them gods and fearing beings who are neither omnipotent nor omniscient.

They, like me, are just using their own cowardly tricks from outside the laws of the world.

They and I are the same.

[We curse the ritual of trials.]

[We curse the remnants left by the first daughter.]

[You will disappear by the will of the stars.]

—!

The world responded to the curses of the three goddesses and let out

a massive resonance.

A huge reverberation that all of humanity living all over the world must have felt.

The demons and trials that the will of the stars was trying to pour down answered that reverberation and shouted loudly from beyond the door.

——!

The will to completely remove humanity.

Hostility that had continued from the distant past.

Unreasonable anger caused by transcendents and the will of the stars.

I felt the hundreds of magical girls gathered for the first battle wavering and despairing.

“Do, do we have to fight such beings?”

“Huge doors are appearing in the sky one after another.”

“Are, are we really going to be destroyed?”

No.

That is just the struggling of transcendents who are afraid of humans, spreading their spines like hedgehogs.

Deceivers who only deceive people with petty tricks like me.

Their struggles have already become unable to interfere due to my promise with [War].

The truly great things already existed in the hearts of magical girls.

“Don’t be afraid.”

“Ugh… but, but!”

“Those are just illusions that are only big in size. They can’t directly

interfere with this world.”

“But they have such an enormous presence?!”

“If they were truly omnipotent beings, they could erase us with just a finger.”

“But, but still!”

“If we submit to them out of vain fear, we won’t be able to protect the things precious to us.”

As soon as I finished speaking, I felt an enormous wave of curses crashing down, enough to make even my hair sway.

A wave of direct and childish malice and curses, like an immature adult trying to instill fear by grabbing a child’s shoulders and pressing down.

A vision of death suddenly approaching and everyone becoming rotten corpses.

A vision of dividing and fighting to gain enormous power and resources.

A vision of eyes and nose rotting and tearing pain throughout the body.

Humanity’s fundamental fears.

Childish fears that can only be shown because they have failed to understand humans for so long.

“…What kind of visual terrorism is this.”

So I felt more and more refreshed.

Because it’s a sight they can show precisely because they are not truly divine beings.

Although I felt a bit sick from tens of thousands of curses overlapping, each capable of extinguishing life alone, I overcame it

with endless starlight and moved forward.

Due to the endless healing, my body sparkled endlessly with colorful starlight.

“What kind of god appears directly to threaten people with childish illusions and curses?”

“Hikari…!”

“Hikari-chan!”

“Leader…!”

“Leader!!”

“…Your Majesty.”

I shouted so that all the magical girls around could hear.

We did not come here to be destroyed by such petty transcendents.

“Those are neither gods nor demons.”

“They’re just beings who luckily got great power!”

“Don’t be scared!”

“We can all overcome this!”

“Because we’re magical girls who gained power to protect people!”

With each step I took forward, I felt the magical girls regaining their senses and burning with fighting spirit.

“My true alias is [Deception]!!”

The magical girls followed behind me, taking one step forward at a time.

Towards the sky where the transcendents’ presence and demons were approaching. And towards the strongest apostle who had come according to our promise.

“A magical girl who deceives beings calling themselves goddesses and twists the fate of humans!”

A massive crack several kilometers long occurred in that sky.

Beyond it was darkness.

In the endlessly churning darkness, eyes shining like lotus seeds were embedded, sending chilling gazes at us.

Black lions dripping black liquid fell from between the slowly opening cracks.

They looked like black rain falling from the red sky, making it seem utterly unreal.

A repulsive appearance made of pure malice pouring from the wounds of stars.

The sound of howling while spewing sticky oil.

“■■■■■!!!”

Guuuung—

Five massive pillars descended from beyond the red sky and fell towards the empty city.

Enormous masses, each hundreds of meters in size.

Their twisted surfaces like wedges were densely engraved with records of all the fights and wars humans had waged, in the most primitive script.

The massive pillars fell onto the city in an instant, causing huge explosions as they were driven into the ground.

Booooooom!!!

The ground flipped over, buildings collapsed, and enormous dust clouds rose.

Tens of thousands of black lions pouring down from the sky like rain.

Massive wedges recording the history of war.

[War] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

World of Struggle

Above that sky, the magical girl of [War] was floating with a huge sky palace behind her.

Reddish-brown hair fluttering in the wind.

Reddish-brown pupils opened with the excitement of war.

Fluttering reddish-brown cape.

Simple black outfit.

A huge blazing blade.

Her appearance looked like a modern female officer, a medieval knight, and an ancient empress all at once.

"…"

"…"

This is a play between me and [War].

Her test as the one overseeing the first trial receiving the will of the stars.

Animus took out her reddish-brown Glass Star and shattered it.

"I… the apostle of [War], renounce all rights as an apostle."

"…"

"I will become humanity's first trial and test humanity to destroy it."

"…"

"If you cannot surpass me… you will live in struggle until the moment only a handful of humanity remains."

“We will surpass you.”

“Humanity, struggle, I will surely evolve you at the moment of the final trial where the remains of the goddesses remain. I will surely preserve you.”

“We don’t need that.”

“Then fight me and win.”

“That’s what I intend to do.”

Animus and I looked at each other.

Animus had a cold expressionless face, but.

Somehow she seemed to be smiling a little.

—!

The will of the stars granted the magical girl of [War], who was performing a sincere play to destroy humanity, the qualification for the trial.

The first trial we must overcome is not mindless demons, but the apostle who once thought of extreme methods to preserve humanity.

The twisted beginning of the original work.

Four starlights rose behind Animus, shining like a halo.

And the battle began.

Chapter 102 : Magical Girl HAZARD

“Hikari!”

“Yeah, I saw it too.”

“Th-that… what on earth.”

“…”

An extraordinary situation unfolded that surprised even Yuki, who had experienced numerous battles including trials.

The 4 stars extending from behind Animus, the magical girl of [War], were a new power beyond our understanding.

Born 3-star.

Fully bloomed 3-star.

The limit of power allowed to magical girls.

The strongest stage where one is connected to the world and has their own domain.

The final realm mentioned in ＜Magical Girl HAZARD＞.

That was supposed to be 3-star.

But the 4 stars emitting huge light like a cross-shaped halo behind the magical girl of [War] floating in the skies above Shinjuku pressed down on us as if mocking such notions.

“…Appear. Idols of humanity. Glory born in war.”

Animus, floating majestically with her reddish-brown hair fluttering, pointed at us with a giant sword larger than a person.

Rough

Crude

Sharp

Flames slowly rose from the giant sword that seemed to represent her temperament.

Whoosh

The fire that started from the tip of the sword burned more and more fiercely until it looked like a huge beacon.

A beacon signaling the start of war.

“Everyone be careful!!”

“What should we do, leader! At this rate the city will be completely flattened!”

“Yuki! Ichika! Endless armies will come out of those obelisks! Take care of one obelisk each!”

“Got it.”

“Leave it to me.”

“Let’s go! Lihua! Asya!”

“Okay!”

“Let’s go together!”

Yuki, who had already fully prepared for battle, flew towards the obelisk with a giant reddish-brown airship floating above it, surrounded by flames along with Chen Lihua and Cho Yeonseo.

“Sirius! Natalia! Please cover the magical girl of [Flame] Yuki’s group!”

-Yes, understood!

Wooong—

The silver giant ship that had been stopped far up in the sky followed Yuki's group's flames and kept the giant reddish-brown ship in check.

The two massive bodies, so huge that their incredible speed didn't feel real, faced each other with the red sky between them.

A barrage of bombardment followed.

Bang

Bang

Bang

The reddish-brown giant ship also responded by firing huge flames in response to the covering attacks pouring from the Sirius. The heat emitted by the two giant ships in the sky was enough to make one's eyes sting.

"Ichika, go towards the one wearing the golden mask over there!"

"Oh! Somehow those minions over there seem lively!"

"I trained specially for today!"

"Kyoko! Let's go quickly!"

As Ichika said, the army of the guardian Agamemnon wearing the golden mask was already advancing with all of them wearing golden masks.

The golden masked army, which felt overwhelmingly stronger than the armies from other obelisks, was charging out with resounding roars.

"■■— ■■■■—!!"

"■■■■!!"

Unlike soldiers from other obelisks, this army discarded spears and shields and grasped swords.

They were moving swiftly, searching for shelters where civilians had evacuated.

Ichika and Kyoko quickly approached the golden masked army, leaping across rooftops.

-Walpurgis team reporting to the magical girl of [Beginning]!

-Currently one of the giant obelisks is gradually blocking roads and isolating magical girls!

"…"

Guardian with the shining helmet

Hector

Unlike other guardians, he didn't show noticeable flashiness, but he was thoroughly disrupting the coordination of magical girls and slowly guiding the flow of the battlefield.

The hundreds of magical girls who were supposed to rush into the Hall of War while I fought the magical girl of [War] were gradually being dispersed and isolated.

"Captain Himari."

-Yes, I'm listening.

"Please join up with the Walpurgis team and attack the obelisk guarded by the guardian with the shining helmet as much as possible."

-Then the Walpurgis team's joining will be greatly delayed, is that okay?

"It's fine."

-Understood.

As soon as the radio transmission ended saying that the Relief Corps led by Himari, the magical girl of [Nursing], had begun clashing with Hector's army, a request for help was heard.

-This is… argh?!

Bang—

The sound of a building collapsing

The sound cut off for a moment, but soon the magical girl sent another transmission.

-…evacuated! This is the magical girl in charge of the sports center where civilians have evacuated!! A giant surrounded by huge flashes is attacking too quickly!! Please help!! We're not enough!!

Guardian of swift feet.

Achilles.

As soon as I heard those words, I called out to Hana and the golden girls.

"Hana-chan! Daphne! Echo! Sylph! Go to the sports center and draw the guardian's attention!"

"Okay Hikari-chan!"

"Understood, Successor!"

"Be careful!"

"Yeah! Of course!"

The girls who answered with determined expressions shot out towards the scene where the sounds of building destruction could be heard in the distance, surrounded by yellow flashes.

Swoosh—

"Your Majesty."

“Fujimoto-san?”

“I will take care of the remaining obelisk.”

“Yes, I’ll leave it to you.”

“…Your Majesty.”

Dizzying flashes and explosions, and noise.

A scene where it felt like one might lose their mind at any moment.

Bang!

Rumble—

“■■■■■!!”

-Announcement from Elysion Observatory! Combat with black lion demons has begun at all sites including Korea and China!

Red sky

Silver giant ships

Green giants

Yellow flashes

Golden blades

In the battlefield where everything began dancing and fighting, the girl who had followed me for the past year spoke.

For today

For numerous magical girls.

Sumire, who had not spared her own body.

“…Thank you. For allowing us to protect everyone.”

“…It’s not over yet.”

“Yes, I will take care of the remaining obelisk.”

The final obelisk where a guardian had not yet appeared.

Sumire walked towards it holding a single sword, along with Kaede and the salon members.

Their first actions as magical girls were not to help others, but. Somehow they had now become a team going around helping numerous people.

“Fujimoto-san.”

“Yes?”

“You must stay safe.”

“…”

Sumire was about to answer something to those words but closed her mouth. Then as she moved forward again, she quietly smiled.

“From now on, I would like you to call me Sumire.”

“Yes, Sumire.”

I deployed magical girls towards all the obelisks.

Now only one thing remained.

I rose into the sky surrounded by colorful starlight and faced the magical girl of [War].

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“…”

“…”

We faced each other in the red sky.

I wordlessly drew out a silver sword, and she silently drew out a reddish-brown great sword.

All words had been exchanged that day with our contract.

Now all that remained was to prove.

I will definitely win.

[Deception] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Cause and Effect Reversal

The first swing of the sword is light, then gradually becomes dazzling.

The path of the sword gradually escalates like a conductor orchestrating destruction.

What the sword tip draws is a thread of destruction.

Swish swish swish—

Silver threads

The sword strikes I shot towards Animus remained as thin silver threads embroidering the air with an eerie sound.

Traces that should have disappeared as momentary flashes remained in the real world, ignoring the laws and leaving sharp scars.

Swish swish swish—

From silver threads

To silver lines

From silver lines

To silver waves

The silver waves, which had grown to hundreds of meters to swallow the strongest enemy standing before me, advanced with an increasingly high and sharp sound, threatening to engulf all the space in front.

Tsutsutsutsu!

The hundreds of meters of space between Animus and me was filled with waves of silver blades that crushed everything.

Tsutsutsutsu!

The huge silver waves that should have lost their way, unable to handle their own power, and spread towards empty space, rushed towards a single place.

Silver waves filling hundreds of meters ahead.

Endless waves of destruction.

In front of the waves of destruction like a sea of mercury poured into a huge flask, Animus merely held her great sword with an expressionless face.

'…She's not even trying to avoid it.'

From the beginning, I poured out starlight from the Glass Star close to infinity, with enough force to completely grind Animus.

The magical girl of [War] I knew would not be frozen with mere fear

or confusion.

To confirm a fragment of the power she would show with 4 stars floating behind her back, I continued to pour out starlight and develop attacks, forming huge waves of destruction.

Until sword energy was swept away by another sword energy.

Until the huge stems that could split a radius of tens of meters with a single stroke were intertwined countless times to look like a giant silver rope.

Tsutsutsutsu!!

A shape like thousands of huge silver snakes intertwined and rushing with open mouths.

Animus looked at it expressionlessly, then casually swung her huge reddish-brown great sword horizontally.

Swoosh—

Though the start clearly seemed slow as if stopped, the end of the full swing was so fast it didn't even leave an afterimage.

—!

The sword tip that was swung so fast that even sound couldn't keep up glowed reddish-brown, and the reddish-brown glow soon burned white with a flash.

Flash

The silver waves rushed into the flash filling the view.

Two enormous powers facing each other.

Booooooom!!!

An ear-splitting explosion.

Reddish-brown flash.

The silver waves containing destructive power disappeared one by one as they met the reddish-brown flash.

Shak

Shak

Shak

In the explosion filled with flashes, thousands of huge silver sword energies unraveled and decomposed like rotten ropes in the reddish-brown flash. The silver sword energies nearly hundreds of meters long decomposed in an instant, leaving only the wind from the explosion.

By the time that wind brushed past my cheek, the scales of greed were already complete.

Click

The scales of greed tilted and began to absorb the surrounding starlight full of reddish-brown flashes with a high sound.

Restored vision

[Deception] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Dream World

Cognition Acceleration

I used cognition acceleration to momentarily increase Animus's cognition speed. But even in the extremely extended cognition, Animus was moving her eyes to match my movements.

Her fate of being able to demonstrate all abilities at their best on the battlefield.

"It's… useless."

Animus spoke a bit slowly, as if the cognition acceleration wasn't completely blocked.

“No! I can feel your mental image!”

“Then… you should know.”

As she said, Animus wasn’t flustered at all.

I broke out in cold sweat watching such an Animus.

‘Damn! Is the cause and effect reversal getting blocked more and more…?! Is this the power of 4-star?’

To somehow increase the chances of victory rapidly disappearing in the cause and effect reversal I had set up earlier.

I tried every method I could use.

If even a tiny possibility arises, the cause and effect reversal will return.

Dream World

Cognition Acceleration

Cause and Effect Reversal

Perception Change

Illusions arose to interfere with Animus’s vision. Hallucinations arose to invade Animus’s cognition.

Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang!

From scythe to sword and back to scythe.

The desolate silver crescent drawn by the scythe larger than a person was instantly sucked into the flames of the reddish-brown great sword, and the waves of destruction drawn by the silver sword disappeared futilely into the cracks of tearing space.

Endless combo attacks, endless collisions.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

As soon as the attack started, we extended our attacks towards where each other's attacks would reach.

The endless barrage like something out of a Hollywood movie was made possible by our monstrous reaction speeds that recognized each other's attacks as soon as they started.

But the balance gradually crumbled.

After the two weapons clashed, there was a huge rupturing sound and my unique weapon was shattered.

'Animus's great sword is intact!'

I couldn't block the huge great sword rushing in with my broken weapon.

Clang!

As my unique weapon endlessly shattered and split, I discarded it without hesitation and drew out another from the starlight.

And the combo attacks continued again.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Animus crushed each of my attacks with precise sword strikes.

We barely maintained balance by repeating destruction and regeneration.

I had starlight close to infinity, and she had the fourth star filled with unknown power.

In our collision that seemed like it would continue endlessly, a moment's gap occurred.

Animus didn't miss it and created distance before swinging her great sword widely.

A huge reddish-brown wave like an army of hundreds.

A destructive sword strike shown by a true war lord.

Baaaaaaang!

Tak-tak-tak-tak!!

The moment she raised her hand holding the great sword, I instinctively brought out an illusion curtain for defense.

A reddish-brown wave rushed towards me.

The curtain shook greatly at the enormous wave and the shock it couldn't absorb hit me.

Boom-bang!!!

In the huge impact of the reddish-brown wave eroding the curtain, I endured while clenching my teeth like they would break. My right hand extending the curtain trembled from the shock and gradually lost sensation.

"Ugh…!"

I barely blocked the reddish-brown flames coming from the great sword Animus was swinging through the curtain, but I felt like I would collapse from the impact that seemed to turn my insides upside down.

"Kugh?!"

"It's over."

Animus trying to strike my neck that had faltered for a moment.

As soon as I confirmed that, I snapped my left fingers to bring out doppelgangers.

Woong!

Clang!

The two clones that appeared to save the original body in crisis were futilely sliced along with the scythes they had drawn. But in that gap, I created distance again and deployed the Dream World.

As I endlessly deployed huge prisms and illusions interfering with Animus's vision, my possibilities revived again in the cause and effect reversal that had been pushed to the limit.

＜Animus will allow an attack in the confusion.＞

Clang!!

Animus blocked the silver scythe I had swung with all my might with her great sword in a movement close to acrobatics.

"If you can't avoid an attack, you can block it."

"Damn it! Who doesn't know that?"

Having created distance again, I kept Animus in check by firing thousands of rainbow-colored arrows with a silver bow, and she nonchalantly blocked them by spinning her reddish-brown great sword like a windmill.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Every time an arrow was deflected, buildings exploded and shockwaves occurred.

Boooom!

Rumble!

A radius of several kilometers where Animus and I were fighting had completely turned into ruins.

Acrid smoke

Burning reddish-brown flames

Red sky

And the screams of hundreds of demons bursting from the aftermath of the battle.

"■■■■■!!!"

We fought fiercely in the midst of it all.

The explosions created by the chaotic mixing of my silver and her reddish-brown grew larger and larger, becoming a sparkling mass filling a radius of hundreds of meters.

For hundreds of meters in all directions, everything was covered in flashes, showing only afterimages like rough pencil scribbles.

Dozens of sword clashes tangled chaotically in between.

I deflected all of them while sometimes using scythes and arrows to counter Animus's attacks.

What shines at the tip of the swung scythe is a silver crescent.

A silver net created by hundreds of fired arrows.

Changing weapons like gladiators of ancient times.

Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang!

And sword strikes advancing again as chaotic silver waves.

Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang!

In the noise like hundreds of blacksmiths frantically hammering iron, Animus and I swung our swords frantically.

We blocked or deflected attacks as soon as we swung our weapons.

Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang!

Every time the swords clashed, shockwaves spread hundreds of meters outwards.

Every time the silver and reddish-brown sword energies remained and exploded, all the windows of buildings kilometers away shattered.

The shape of destruction.

Animus and I tried to take each other down by projecting all our

starlight towards each other in the middle of the battlefield where the five guardians and magical girls were fighting.

Booooooom!!!

Another explosion occurred.

But I was pushed back in it.

The gap with Animus widened again.

Reddish-brown eyes quietly observing me across the gap.

“Kugh…”

“…”

[Conquest] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Divine Manifestation

Divinity of War

“Appear. Divinity of humanity. Faith born in war.”

“A second alias…”

The huge 4 stars behind Animus resonated and emitted a reddish-brown halo.

Huge power slowly gathering and taking shape behind the reddish-brown halo.

Reddish-brown starlights filling the gap between her and me, surrounding us like an arena barrier.

While emitting an incomparably holy light, Animus called out.

“Ares.”

“Ugh…?!”

A crack hundreds of meters wide opened behind Animus, and

through it, an idol with shining eyes inside a helmet holding a huge spear emerged with tremendous pressure.

Divinity

Faith

Idol

She had summoned an object of belief with the mere body of a human magical girl.

Rumble

Lights flashed with thunder in the reddish-brown dark clouds, splitting the red sky.

The desperate wishes humanity once had while waging war.

The faith humanity once felt through war.

The idol of a god embodying all of this possessed power on a different dimension from the guardians protecting the obelisks.

Dong—

Dong—

Dong—

The sound of war drums from the palace far beyond the sky Animus was facing grew louder and louder.

“Here I come. With the maximum power the will of the stars has allowed me.”

“…”

As Animus pointed her huge great sword at me, the manifested idol of Ares aimed its reddish-brown spear that seemed over 10 meters long.

I tried to block it by drawing out infinite starlight.

Chapter 104 : Like a Shining Meteor

Booooooom—

A huge rupturing sound that gave goosebumps just from hearing it.

Hana looked up for a moment.

A giant spear blade splitting the sky.

Numerous illusions and silver weapons opposing the spear blade.

Between the huge scars that seemed like they would roughly tear the red sky, two beings were continuing their fierce battle.

Silver gushing out between colorful lights.

Reddish-brown gushing out between burning barriers.

The two huge colors were chaotically intertwined, covering the red sky.

The sight was so enormous that it made those watching freeze in place.

Hana was filled with worry at the fact that her friend was fighting there.

“Hikari-chan…?!”

“Hana!! It’s dangerous!!”

“Ah!”

“Hana!! Snap out of it!! You need to dodge!!”

Echo, her short blonde hair fluttering, shouted urgently while pushing back giant soldiers and black lions with sound waves in the baseball stadium.

“Eh?!”

Crack crack crack!!

A reddish-brown flash rushed before Hana’s eyes as she turned back.

A giant larger than a utility pole was running while crushing everything, surrounded by reddish-brown flashes.

The giant’s light grew from a dot to fill the entire view.

Crack crack crack!

Shattering asphalt.

Overturning walls.

Flying vehicles.

The plan was to divert the giant attacking the sports center with an all-out attack, then escape as far as possible, and Hana’s group was on their way back to destroy the obelisk after passing through the baseball stadium.

Echo pushed back enemies with sound waves. Sylph lifted the group with wind. Daphne supported the group so they wouldn’t get tired.

Receiving all that help, Hana was able to attack the giant faster than ever before and then escape. But Achilles, the giant who had been kilometers away from Hana’s group, chased after them with a flash.

“No way?! We had gone so far!”

“Sylph!! This is no time to be surprised!! Dodge!!”

Achilles’ two legs moved so strongly and swiftly that his upper body seemed to float like a ghost as he approached.

Hana desperately tried to wrap herself in yellow starlight to escape

from the giant, but she could feel Achilles' momentum getting closer little by little.

Like a high-speed train running on invisible tracks.

Becoming a spear incomparable to anything else with just speed and momentum.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

Due to Achilles' momentum, everything around shattered as if hit by a storm, and it felt like passing through a tunnel made of debris flying up simultaneously.

Crack crack crack!

Is this what it would feel like to watch a train rushing out of a tunnel while standing on the tracks?

Even while facing Achilles' charge that seemed like it would tear her skin with just momentum, Hana unconsciously imagined such a thing.

Darkness chaotically shaking between the reddish-brown armor.

The gaze visible through the face guard of the worn-out helmet.

Killing intent

Death

Destruction

Crushing

If hit by that, she would die.

Her small body would probably be shattered without a trace.

Thinking that, Hana's breath seemed to freeze.

'What should I do.'

Even if she dies and comes back to life like this.

If she leaves the battle, she won't be able to help Hikari-chan.

If she loses, many non-magical girls will die.

Mom and Dad waiting at home will be in danger.

And the little sister who recently came into this world.

-Hana-chan! When your little sister is born, you have to protect her, okay?

-Mom, Dad and Hana will protect the baby together.

-Yes! Of course!

"Ah…"

It was just a step away from Hana's fragile body colliding with the giant body that was meters tall approaching her.

"Hana!!! It's dangerous!!!"

In that moment stretched like eternity, golden starlight enveloped Hana and she was able to dodge the giant's charge by a hair's breadth.

As she rolled, the red sky and ground flipped, dizzily shaking her vision.

Gasping breath

Golden hair

Red sky

When her vision returned after everything was chaotically mixed, Hana could finally breathe with relief at having survived.

"Ugh…"

"A-are you okay, Daphne?"

“M-my head hurts.”

Lying on the ground with the golden girl who had come to save her, Hana heard the sound of the wall on the opposite side of the baseball stadium collapsing.

Crack crack crack!

Booooooom!!

Rumble—

Unable to stop the remaining force from his transcendent speed despite missing the target, Achilles charged through the stadium hundreds of meters wide and shattered the opposite wall.

The noise of Achilles disappearing beyond the wall after completely passing through the stadium was faintly heard.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

Hana, who had barely escaped the moment of crisis, looked at Daphne holding her with one hand.

Daphne’s one arm was completely mangled due to the giant’s momentum.

An arm with joints bent, dangling.

Her fluttering white clothes were a mess of dust and blood, and her beautiful golden hair was completely tangled with sweat.

“Ugh… Ha-Hana!! Let’s get away while we have the chance!!”

“Daphne! Your arm… arm! I’ll heal you!”

Just as Hana clenched her chattering teeth in fear and tried to use her healing ability while emitting yellow starlight.

Booooooom!!

Achilles, who had disappeared beyond the wall, came down from the sky over the baseball stadium fence.

Like a meteor splitting the red sky.

“Daphneeeee!!! I’ll save youuuu!!!”

“Sylph!! No!!”

“Uwaaaaaa…!!!”

The golden girl with always dull eyes created a huge wall of wind while straining her neck.

A hemispherical barrier made of countless winds gathered.

The flash of the reddish-brown giant flying through the red sky.

The collision of the two powers, shot like striking an egg with a huge spear, created an explosion that shattered everything around with an ear-splitting roar.

Swoooosh!!!

Booooooom—

Debris shooting up into the sky.

The ground being destroyed.

Everything floated up into the sky like hammering the surface of water in the face of pure violence.

Hana saw the figures of her other friends who had come to save her as she was helplessly flung away in the midst of it.

Sylph, who had overexerted herself deploying the barrier, was blown away by the aftershock while bleeding from her nose.

Daphne, who had lost the use of one arm to save Hana, rolled through the debris covered in blood.

Echo, who had been blowing away black lions nearby, was flung far away by the bombardment that occurred behind her.

Everything happened in an instant, feeling utterly unreal.

Crash!

Hana, who had flown into the sky and fallen back to the ground, rolling several times, couldn't get up from the impact.

Her limp body felt as numb as her lower body that had been paralyzed before becoming a magical girl.

A sensation like floating in the air without any feeling.

Emptiness

Despair

"Ugh… urk…!"

"…!…!"

"…!!!…!!"

Beep—

Through her eardrums completely blown out by the aftermath of the destruction, she seemed to hear her friends saying something with difficulty.

Run away

It's dangerous

'As if I could run away leaving you all behind…'

Vibrations from heavy footsteps approaching from far away reverberated through Hana's body touching the ground.

Thud

Thud

Thud

Beyond the stadium that Hana barely turned her head to look at, hundreds of giant soldiers and lions were approaching, surrounding

them.

“■■■■■!!”

“■■■!!”

While her friends’ voices sounded faint as if heard underwater, why did those unpleasant howls sound so clear?

Rumble…

Along with the sound of the stadium shattering and collapsing.

A reddish-brown flash was coming down again from beyond the sky.

Rumble…

To end the lives of her friends and herself.

To find and harm people again.

Rumble…

Hana got up with her numb arms trembling.

Like that day when lower body paralysis came.

Like that day when she endlessly fell and cried with her face buried in the bed.

“Ugh… Hikari-chan…! Mom…! Dad…!”

And her little sister.

Hana got up remembering everything.

Even with trembling legs. Even with her whole body numb and aching. Even if all her friends had fallen. Hana barely raised her body that had lost even the sensation of pain and stood up alone in the stadium.

Demons completely surrounded them.

Soldiers approached with spear blades shining sharply.

Reddish-brown flash approached from beyond the sky.

Swish—

Hana wiped away the nosebleed flowing from the impact and faced them with difficulty, opening her eyes.

She was now the only magical girl who could stand up in the stadium.

No matter how much magical girls could return from death, ignoring friends in danger was not Hana's way of living.

As kindly as her first friend who didn't ignore her shabby self in the cafe.

With love like her mother who cared for her when she was nothing but a burden.

As strong as her father who said cheerfully that everything would work out.

There was only one thing Hana had to do at this moment.

Run.

Run wrapped in starlight.

Blow everything away with the starlight of swiftness.

For her friends.

For her family.

For the people.

Run.

"Hup! What I'm… what I'm good at is…!"

Running to help people.

‘Because magical girls exist to protect people.’

At this moment, she had to burn like a meteor coming down from the sky and protect them.

As she recalled the gratitude and encouragement of the people she had helped so far, yellow starlight gradually began to boil up.

Hana spread her legs wide, planted her hands on the ground, raised her head and looked at the approaching demons.

Chapter 105 : Like a Shining Meteor

* * *

“Hana-chan! Look, a meteor shower!”

“…”

“They say if you make a wish, it’ll come true! Come on, let’s make a wish with Mommy!”

“…I want to walk.”

“…”

On a cold winter night.

The campsite that the Sato couple had brought their daughter to comfort her, as she couldn’t go outside, was quiet.

Hana’s words blurted out.

“Shooting stars are stars dying and falling, right? They just shine for a moment and disappear.”

“Th-that’s…”

“…Like me, who stupidly fell down the stairs.”

“N-no!”

Hana’s mother couldn’t answer any further and just held her daughter’s hand.

Such a cruel reality.

Was it a luxury to hope that her daughter would cheer up just from the twinkling of stars?

“…Ha-Hana-chan.”

“…”

The Sato couple’s expressions twisted with sadness at the sight of their daughter wrapped in blankets in a wheelchair.

Silence

Unable to bear that silence, Hana’s mother began to sob.

Quiet mountains, shining stars, and sobbing cries.

But the memory of that day was not of a ruined camping trip.

For Hana, the memory of that day was of a day of hope to be remembered forever.

Swish

Hana’s father walked forward silently, with the burning campfire behind him.

Shooting stars falling, leaving trails among countless stars.

A wave of stars embroidered across the black sky.

Tails of stars, trajectories and traces of stars.

“…”

Some realization flashed through the man’s mind.

Like a meteor.

The man standing under the stars spoke with love rising from deep in his heart.

“Hana-chan.”

“…”

“Shooting stars… don’t just shine for a moment.”

“Huh?”

“All those stars we see now have been running for a very… very long time.”

“Long… time?”

“They’ve been running continuously from far out in space since before Hana-chan was born, before Mommy and Daddy were born, before Grandma and Grandpa were born…”

“…”

The words that sounded like whispers gradually became clearer and filled with conviction.

“What we see in front of us now is the greeting left by stars as they pass by.”

“Greeting?”

“Yes, Hana-chan! Shooting stars don’t die! They’re still running far away even now!”

Running from far out in space.

A greeting left on Earth that they happen to pass by.

It’s not the end of stars, but a fateful encounter.

The father, who had returned to the campfire, held both of Hana’s hands and spoke loudly.

“Meteors are greetings shared to meet us during the journey of shooting stars!”

“The journey… hasn’t ended yet?”

“Yes! They’ve run from farther than the sun to meet Hana, Daddy,

and Mommy, and now they're greeting us!"

"…Greeting."

"That's right, Hana-chan can become a person like a meteor! You can become someone who brings smiles to many people, like the greetings left by shooting stars!"

"…Like a meteor."

"Let's do our best together. Hana-chan. Daddy and Mommy will do our best too."

"Like a meteor."

Her mother, who had been crying, smiled strongly upon hearing those words.

"That's right! So our family can give hope to others together. Mommy will do her best too!"

Because the campfire reflecting in her mother's tears looked like shooting stars passing by.

Because the campfire reflecting in her father's eyes looked like it was burning.

"Like a meteor…!"

At that moment, Hana smiled with tears for the first time since she lost the use of her legs.

The meteor that started in the quiet mountains shone again, burning brightly at this moment.

When Hana opened her eyes again, she saw numerous demons and giants before her.

Thud

Thud

Thud

They were coming in unison to erase the world we live in.

They were coming to invade the world we loved.

“■■■■■!!!”

“■■!!■■■■!!”

Fallen friends.

Ominous sounds.

Red sky.

Burning city.

Faint screams.

Terrifying sights that made it seem like the world might be ending at this moment.

A bleak situation that made it seem pointless to run now.

“…”

Sato Hana.

An ordinary girl who could be found anywhere.

She saw a meteor in the depths of despair a few years ago.

“Hikari-chan.”

The one who answered her with a kind smile in the cafe where the sunset was faintly visible.

From that smile, she gained the confidence to truly face others, and to truly save others.

Hana’s best friend had said:

“The twinkling of stars… comes from dreams.”

What are dreams?

At least for Hana.

“Like a meteor… let’s run.”

Leaving a twinkling greeting in everyone’s hearts like a meteor.

Leaving a spark of light and hope in everyone’s hearts.

Sato Hana’s burning heart will become a meteor and split that sky.

“■■■■!!”

Countless spear blades shot out, seeming to try to trap Hana.

Black lions rushed in all at once, darkening her vision.

“Like a meteor!!”

Hana ran with all her might into the endless darkness.

A single meteor born with a huge yellow explosion.

Booooooom—!!

Arms stretching out as cool and refreshing as the winter sky’s wind.

Legs stepping as light and free as summer sky’s clouds.

The sky was always in the girl’s heart.

As she recalled the sky where countless meteors passed by, an incomparable sparkle gathered around Hana’s body.

Milky Way.

Sato Hana shot out, becoming a yellow sparkling Milky Way.

Flash—!!

With each step, distances of tens of meters were closed in an instant, conveying the will to move forward.

The yellow star cluster surrounding her entire body sparkled, spewing out flashes to clear away the darkness before her eyes.

Sato Hana was a single shooting star that had been running from the moment she was born until now.

Flash!!

Every time the yellow trajectory brushed past, black lions and giant soldiers were flung up into the sky.

“■■■■■!!”

“■■■■!!”

Hana became a single meteor.

She ran forward, driving away hundreds of demons and giant soldiers.

She became a shining meteor to drive away everything threatening Hana and her friends.

Deflecting

Deflecting

Deflecting

Deflecting

Even while endlessly deflecting, the yellow meteor did not stop.

Even if everything before her eyes was covered in black.

Running

Running

Running

Run

Flash—

The single meteor moving freely through the stadium was so pure and dazzling, like a picture being drawn with a yellow crayon, and the soldiers and demons being helplessly flung away were like paint coloring the night sky.

Hana wanted to title the picture she was creating ‘Hope’.

“I’m running like a meteor!!”

“■■■■■!!!”

A reddish-brown flash came down from the sky, chasing the yellow meteor driving away their soldiers.

A destructive charge.

Approaching death.

But Hana was no longer afraid.

For a sparkle more precious than death.

Hana instead rushed towards the reddish-brown flash that she couldn’t drive away no matter how much she ran.

Swoosh—!

Hands full of yellow starlight.

She ran forward, pushing back the reddish-brown giant’s chest.

“■■!!”

Bang!!

The reddish-brown giant turned its head with difficulty and struck Hana’s head with all its might.

A fist coming down full of reddish-brown flashes.

The fist as hard as an iron hammer rushed towards the head of a girl

smaller than a palm.

Thud!

Bang!

It hurts.

So much that she couldn't even scream.

Thwack!

Bang!

One punch and everything went dark

One punch and everything flashed

Bang!

Thud!

Still, Hana didn't stop.

Even if blood from her nose wet her lips

Even if blood flowing from her head covered her eyes

Because it felt like the yellow meteor would end the moment she stopped running.

Hana opened her mouth full of the taste of blood and shouted.

"I'm… running… like a meteoooooor!!!"

"■■…■■■■■!!!"

Swoosh!

The yellow star cluster gathered behind the girl pushing back the giant, becoming a huge tail trailing behind her.

It shone as the huge tail of a meteor that didn't stop running for her

friends and for people.

Swoosh—!!

The yellow meteor swallowed up all the reddish-brown flashes and shot towards the sky.

A meteor rising to the sky.

The yellow meteor was pushing back the reddish-brown giant, flying across the red sky.

Though she was clearly flying through the sky, Hana felt like she was running with all her might.

In the midst of the giant's punches and flashes, Hana was running with all her might.

-Ah! She's running away!! She's overtaking her opponent in an instant!!

What could those words mean?

Where was that voice coming from?

Hana suddenly turned her head to the side.

Golden clouds

Beyond them, some girl was running.

The one running was a girl with long arms and legs.

A girl much taller and cooler than her plain self.

The girl, who seemed even taller than Hikari, was running with all her might, her side ponytail swaying.

-Aaaah!!! 3rd place!! 2nd place!!! She's breaking through!! Finally in the lead!!!

That girl was dazzling, shining with golden light.

A future erased by a butterfly flying over stairs.

-Gold medal!!! The youngest national representative!! Sato Hana!! She's finally won the gold medal!!

-The miracle girl who brought the gold medal carrying the hopes of the entire nation!! Sato Hana!!

-The miracle girl who displayed her talent to the world since elementary school!! Now!! She's writing legend!!

Beyond the golden clouds, Mom and Dad were shouting from the stadium stands until their voices went hoarse.

The two shouting with tears streaming from their eyes.

-Hana-chaaaan!!! You're the best!!! We're so proud of youuu!!

-We love youuu!! Hana-chan!!!

"Ah…"

Seeing that, Hana started crying.

So much that she even forgot about the battle with the giant for a moment.

-Sato Hana has expressed her intention to donate all advertising fees and profits to children with disabilities, gaining support from many citizens.

-The inauguration ceremony of the Sato Hana Foundation was a big topic as famous athletes from various countries attended.

-Sato Hana is the pride of all Japan!

-According to a survey, Sato Hana was selected as this year's Sports Person…

Because her current self seemed so shabby.

Because the girl running beyond the golden clouds was so dazzling.

Was she wrong?

No.

She already had that sparkle too.

The night sky in Hana's heart was already twinkling with countless stars.

-Hana can become a person like a meteor!

-I love you, Hana-chan.

-Thank you, Sato-san!

-Thanks! Sato kiddo!

-Thank you, Sato-san.

-Thanks for taking me.

-I wasn't late thanks to you!

-Thank you Hana-chan!

-You're so fast! Really cool!

-Thanks for helping.

A night sky with countless twinkling stars.

Under that night sky, get in position and prepare to run.

Let's enter among those stars and greet them while twinkling together.

"Uwaaaaaaaaa!!!"

Hana ran, spewing out the dreams twinkling in her chest.

-Athlete Sato Hana!! She's running forward again!!

-The lead! She's overtaking the lead!!

The yellow meteor was already overtaking the golden girl and running ahead.

With a yellow light shining brighter than gold.

“I’ll make everyone happy like a meteor!!!”

Filled with a shining Milky Way.

“I am the magical girl Sato Hana!!!”

Becoming a single meteor.

“I’m proud of who I am now!!!”

Fully Bloomed 3-star Magical Girl of [Swiftness]

Sato Hana

As Hana passed by the golden girl.

-Do your best!

The golden girl smiled and said to Hana.

Receiving that encouragement, Hana shot up into the sky, becoming a star.

Yellow starlight enveloped Hana, who was full of wounds.

A yellow Milky Way began to grasp and swallow the reddish-brown giant’s fist.

A yellow meteor separated from Hana’s body and embroidered the sky.

[Swiftness] Magical Girl’s Unique Skill

Flash Girl

Becoming a star shining brighter than a flash.

Starlight gushed out from her magical girl outfit, which had

somehow changed into a yellow dress full of starlight, and shot towards the reddish-brown giant.

Swoosh!

The starlight of the night sky

The yellow sparkle

Became thousands of meteors passing through and crushing the giant.

Kagagak!!

"■…■■!!"

Crunch

Crunch

The gradually disappearing reddish-brown giant was now crumbling at the starting point of the universe.

Towards the Earth covered in red atmosphere.

Hana, grabbing the reddish-brown giant's collar, threw Achilles straight to the ground.

Boooom!!!

The yellow meteor eroded.

The yellow Milky Way grasped.

The battered guardian Achilles turned to dust in the hands of the girl who had overcome even another self, and fell to the ground.

Like a meteor.

Chapter 106 : Like a Shining Meteor

[Announcement from Elysion Observatory!! Guardian Achilles has been defeated!!]

"Hana-chan...!"

Even in the midst of struggle, I was able to regain strength as the face of the girl imbued with yellow starlight came to mind.

"Whew...!"

"..."

Animus facing me again as I readied my stance, and the god of war gripping a 10-meter spear as tall as herself.

The spear containing the divinity of Ares, the idol summoned by Animus, was terribly threatening.

The infinite starlight that I could uniquely wield now.

The balance of the battle I was barely maintaining with it shook every time Ares' spear moved.

The battle temporarily subsided due to Achilles' defeat.

"One guardian has fallen."

"Hehe, how about that? You can't underestimate us now, can you?"

"I've never underestimated humanity's power. I'm just doing my best in chaos."

"..."

Great sword and long spear

Even a moment's respite was a great help in the storm-like barrage of attacks from these beings wielding two huge weapons.

If the conversation had continued a bit longer, I could have fully recovered my starlight, but unfortunately, Animus charged at me again with her reddish-brown great sword.

Flash!

Clang!

The inevitable impact when clashing with my silver sword, and once again my unique weapon completely chipped.

I discarded the broken silver sword and drew out a new silver sword from the starlight.

What could be the power contained in her fourth star?

That power allowing a human body to touch divinity seemed to have been forcibly opened by the will of the stars.

"Kugh?!"

"You're still full of distractions."

With a threatening wind that seemed like it would cut off my hair, the huge great sword approached leaving afterimages like flames.

Swoosh—

The reddish-brown wave tens of meters long that inevitably followed the sword strike pushed me back with a heavy impact like hundreds of soldiers thrusting spears.

Kagagagak!!

Creeeeak—

Sparks flew where I blocked with the silver sword and illusion curtain, offsetting the impact, but it was still gradually scraped away

by the remaining force.

Creeeeak

'She's deliberately scraping away bit by bit!'

After such checks coming between Animus's bold attacks, Ares would always strike.

Turning my head slightly, sure enough, Ares was charging from far away like a knight in a jousting tournament.

"Now!!"

"■■!"

Swish!!

I dodge the threateningly brushing attack and discard the silver sword.

I swing the silver scythe with cause and effect reversal to unleash a certain hit attack.

Swoosh!

The huge blade of the swinging silver scythe left a translucent silver afterimage as it drew a circle.

"...A weapon of [Death]."

Even Animus couldn't defend against all the combo attacks unleashed with the silver scythe containing infinite starlight that cuts through everything.

When Animus retreats far away, I shoot thousands of arrows with a silver bow to keep her in check.

Papapapat!!

Whoooosh!!

The great sword spinning like a windmill leaving reddish-brown

afterimages deflects all the arrows.

Bang!

Boom!

Rumble—

While hearing the sounds of surrounding buildings collapsing again from the deflected arrows, I predict the next pattern.

Having seen Animus's attacks over a thousand times with transcendent vision, similar movements are starting to become familiar.

Though she had become overall stronger due to the fourth star, the starlight she could pour into her attacks was no different from other apostles.

There may be overwhelming output, but there is no overwhelming infinite starlight.

She's just able to use 'some power' more due to external factors.

And that 'some power' is something I've seen a lot somewhere.

Thousands of nuclear missiles.

The goddess of [Beginning].

White arrows.

-Please think about the true meaning of [Deception].

"The true meaning of [Deception]."

Yuki from 2-star to 3-star

Animus from 3-star to 4-star

The second alias that came with one starlight is not completely unrelated to the first alias.

Yuki's [Flame] was connected to [Resurrection].

Animus's [War] was connected to [Conquest].

My first aliases are [Beginning] and [Deception].

"..."

The image of resurrection burning again like a phoenix.

The image of a monarch rushing to conquer the opponent on the battlefield.

Unlike their aliases directly related to their second alias, my alias is too abstract.

The reason I was able to easily realize [Deception] in the first place was due to the power the goddess of [Beginning] had imbued.

'The second fate... that I must fulfill.'

What could that be?

"You're still full of distractions."

"Ugh?!"

As Animus said, I could die if I get lost in thoughts here.

I quickly came to my senses and drew out the silver sword again. But Animus didn't react to that attack and raised one hand up.

"Are you going to repeat this again? The tug of war ends here."

"What?"

"Come forth. Athena."

Rumble!!

In the flashing reddish-brown lightning, another crack hundreds of meters wide occurred.

From the crack writhing with chaos and darkness, the second idol slowly walked out with tremendous pressure.

A goddess with impressively tall helmet plumes and a fluttering navy blue cape.

Athena appeared holding a shield that could cover her entire body and a gleaming sword, and took her place to Animus's left.

To Animus's right, Ares took his place, fully prepared to charge with his huge spear.

Two idols, Ares and Athena.

The balance I was barely maintaining by reading patterns and pressing down with infinite starlight seemed like it would completely crumble.

"Damn it, keep calling gods!"

"Realize."

"What?"

"..."

Animus pulled the reddish-brown great sword to her chest and gripped it with both hands.

The slowly rising reddish-brown great sword was enveloped in huge flames starting from the hilt, and those flames grew endlessly, rising tens of meters into the sky.

The war lord's flames shining brilliantly, piercing even the dark energy heavily hanging over the red sky.

"Defeat me."

Whoosh!!

Reddish-brown flames splitting the red sky.

Clang!

Athena covering herself with a shining shield and extending her sword.

Swoosh!

Ares thrusting his huge spear forward and preparing for a second charge.

"Defeat me by any means necessary."

Animus, with a more solemn expression than ever, unleashed a massive strike.

Kwaaaaaaaa!!!

The huge flames tens of meters long extending from the reddish-brown great sword slowly descended carrying a heavy energy like hundreds of soldiers, Athena approached swirling storm-like energy while holding a huge shield, and Ares charged making a thunder-like sound while gripping a huge spear.

It was impossible to block everything.

'Then I'll take a few hits and endure with healing while preparing for the next attack...!'

I was thinking that while holding the silver scythe and preparing for the massive strike.

That's when it happened.

A faint voice in my ear.

"Hikari-chan!!"

"Hana-chan?!"

Yellow star

Yellow meteor

Yellow Milky Way

Thousands of dazzling meteors fell across the red sky and approached with a blinding light.

Among countless stars, Hana in a yellow dress stretched out both hands and pointed at Animus, and thousands of meteors fell, enveloping and neutralizing the huge flames she was unleashing.

Papapapat!!

Yellow starlight gradually invading the enormous pillar of flames.

Rumble!!

Flash!!

The reddish-brown flames, now imbued with the yellow Milky Way, stagnated in midair, no longer able to descend.

Woong—

A chilling friction sound was coming from between the reddish-brown flames trying to descend and the yellow Milky Way trying to block them.

Crack—

But when force was added as the reddish-brown flames blazed fiercely from Animus's gripping arm, the yellow starlight could no longer endure and gradually disappeared.

The momentary gap Hana created.

"Ugh!! I, I can't block any more!!"

"Thank you Hana-chan!!"

I deployed the Dream World towards Ares and Athena charging through that gap.

"■■■■!"

"■■...!!"

They charged while shouting in the language of idols, but passed by me in confusion at the sudden illusion.

Flash!

Swoosh!

While avoiding as much as possible the energy gushing out from the two idols that passed by with the sound of air being split, I scattered in all directions while deploying clones.

Clones I couldn't deploy when facing them alone as there was no way to create an opening.

While Hana's dazzling yellow star cluster confused Animus and made her falter little by little, the clones each drew their silver bows and rained down arrows.

"Hah!"

Swooosh—

Thousands of arrows coming from one silver bow multiplied by seven clones, shooting towards Animus drawing not lines but planes.

Tens of thousands of arrows descending upon Animus who was advancing while gradually breaking through the yellow star cluster.

The colorful arrows exploded.

Booooooom!!

As the flash cleared, Animus appeared unscathed, covered in a reddish-brown curtain.

No

Her breath that had consistently dominated the battlefield until now was slightly disturbed.

Infinite starlight and yellow star cluster.

Two idols and reddish-brown flames.

This place where everything was chaotically entangled in battle was again being pulled taut with tension.

"Whew! She's really strong!"

"Yeah, Hana-chan's help was a big boost. How are the others?"

"Hehe! Everyone's safe!"

Flash!

Ares and Athena, who had returned at some point, were standing beside Animus preparing for the next attack.

I drew out the silver sword and bestowed the blessing of cause and effect reversal on Hana.

Hana, who received the colorful light, confidently shouted.

"Let's win spectacularly like shining meteors!"

"Yes! Hana-chan!"

Chapter 107 : Wisteria Flowers

Swoosh—

The stems covered in lavender flowers swayed with the summer breeze.

When the lavender waves spreading over the hundreds of meters of wall rippled, an intense fragrance rose from within.

The wisteria garden.

Since wisteria was a vine plant and poisonous, it could only be grown on specially constructed walls, but Sumire especially liked the quiet wisteria garden in the corner.

Swoosh—

When the flower fragrance tickled her nose, carried by the gentle breeze.

She could feel free like a 9-year-old girl, escaping from the etiquette lessons and manners education she had to receive 24 hours a day as a lady of the Fujimoto family.

"Sister Sumire!!"

"Anna."

Pitter-patter

Fujimoto Anna approaching with unladylike steps while wearing an elegant kimono.

Sumire was happy to see Anna, her only close younger relative.

Except for her deceased mother and grandmother, she was the only

female family member she was close to, and her pure younger cousin who wasn't much younger was so adorable.

Somehow walking so skillfully in a narrow kimono, Anna instantly approached from the garden entrance to the corner where Sumire was walking.

Sumire tidied Anna's disheveled hair with her small hand.

"Did Uncle come?"

"Yes!"

"...A lady shouldn't run so recklessly."

"Yes!"

"Oh my."

Hop hop

The sister who seemed to barely listen to her words hopped around the garden like a rabbit with very unladylike behavior.

Sumire let out a small laugh at her sister's appearance but quietly watched over her from behind to make sure she didn't fall.

'Uncle said he wanted Anna to grow up freely.'

Father, whose only purpose was to continue and prosper the Fujimoto family tradition, did not tolerate behavior unbefitting the Fujimoto family's status.

Father's younger brother, who claimed Fujimoto was just an ordinary family and advocated coexistence with others while living freely.

The two brothers, only a year apart like herself and Anna, had extremely different ideologies but got along well because the younger brother quickly conceded the succession rights to his older brother.

"Sister! Sister!"

"Yes?"

"Mother said she wants to go on a trip to Hawaii with Sister Sumire this time! Let's go together! What color swimsuit do you like? Red? Bikini?"

"Anna, that's too immodest a color."

One-sided notification

Sumire couldn't help but smile at Anna's purity in unhesitatingly including her in the family trip, showing she truly considered her family, and deciding without waiting for her choice.

"Pfft."

"Ah~ Why! Sister! Let's go together~"

"Hehehe, please be quiet in the garden, Anna."

"Hehehe!"

"And I can't go because I have many lessons to take. I have to become a perfect lady to be the guardian of the Fujimoto family."

"Guardian? Why do you have to do that?"

"Hmm... So Anna can live comfortably like now?"

"Wow! Thank you!"

"Hehehe, what's that."

The two sisters held hands and walked through the garden, talking like that.

Such a nostalgic memory.

"Sister, why do they grow so many of these lavender trees?"

"It's the tree symbolizing the Fujimoto family, it can bloom flowers even in barren places and make delicious honey."

"Ba-barren?"

"Land where it's difficult for flowers to grow."

"Aha!"

Anna, who had run off, broke off a wisteria flower stem and tapped Sumire's shoulder.

'She must have seen it in a manga or something.'

Did her sister, who made her kneel with a solemn expression like a medieval knighting ceremony, know?

If someone caught the Fujimoto family heir kneeling, it would cause quite a commotion.

"I ap-appoint Sister as the guardian of Fujimoto!"

"Appoint."

"...Appoint!"

"Yes, I will protect all precious things including Anna forever."

"Hehe."

"Hehehe."

Anna looked at Sumire and smiled brightly.

Stab—!!

While stabbing a dagger into Sumire's chest several times.

"Aaaaah!!"

"Haha, Sister. Nice to see you!"

"Kugh...!"

Sumire looked at Anna, who had somehow defeated all her comrades and was now straddling her, digging into her stomach with a sharp dagger.

She had approached wondering if it could be, since the last obelisk appeared where the Fujimoto Building was located.

Sumire, who had returned to where the Fujimoto Building was after several months, shuddered.

Because her sister's face, with the red sky behind her, looked too mature compared to her memory.

But the face of her pure sister from that time still remained.

Because her sister casually killing people while smiling was so chilling.

Because it was so sad that she killed people insensitively, just like Father.

Sumire cried out, forgetting even the pain she felt in her cold hands, feet, and stomach from the blood loss.

"An-Anna...!"

"Yes! Nice to see you!"

"Why!!"

Pain

In the pain like being stabbed with a red-hot poker, Sumire cried out miserably. Seeing Sumire like that, Anna instead widened her blood-red eyes in surprise.

"Why are you doing this!!"

"Hm? Wow, I didn't know you could get angry like that too. That's unexpected. I thought you were emotionless like Uncle."

"Why... why..."

"Why, you ask. Well."

Terribly collapsed building

Fujimoto headquarters

Tens of thousands of blades scattered on the ground

On the ground soaked with blood flowing from between the debris, Anna smiled and completely removed her leather mask, and as her black hair fell swaying, a girl's face chillingly similar to Sumire's appeared.

"I."

Rolling Fujimoto Eiji's head with her foot in black boots.

Wearing a necklace of fingers threaded from those with the Fujimoto name.

Creating a river of blood on the ground from those accidentally involved.

"Have returned here."

A face with large scars remaining.

Wounds that refused self-healing.

"To take [Revenge]."

"Why... why even uninvolved people...!"

"When did I ever care about such things? That's ridiculous."

"Ridiculous...? Killing people is...?"

"Yes! You have no right to say such things!"

Because you're the eldest daughter of Fujimoto.

Because you're the heir to a family stained with blood.

Anna stroked Sumire's face while slowly turning the dagger stuck in her stomach.

"Hehehe..."

"Aaaah!!"

Squelch

Red blood spurted from the wound, wetting the pale scars on Anna's face.

Sumire got goosebumps as Anna's face, gradually turning red with blood, looked like a flush rising from ecstasy.

Reddish-brown energy swirled in Anna's blood-red eyes, which were emitting an increasingly thick killing intent.

"Beloved sister."

"Kugh...!"

Stab

A thin skewer-like knife stabbed into Sumire's arm, drawing blood.

The skewer, gleaming with oil and blood from stabbing people countless times, was disgusting just to look at.

"Sister who loved me."

"Aah!!"

Stab

A jagged knife like a saw stabbed into Sumire's white leg, spurting blood like a fountain.

It mercilessly tore the skin under her tattered clothes, causing pain that made her head go white.

"Now for the final revenge."

"Ugh...!"

"It's too perfect. As expected, rather than an arrogant old man who's just a weak human..."

Anna, with the ominously red-dyed sky behind her, spoke in an ecstatic voice while holding her face with both hands covered in black gloves.

"...I wanted to kill the beautiful and perfect sister last. After destroying everything Uncle treasured, at the very end."

"Ugh..."

"Do you know I've been dreaming of this moment for 7 years?"

"..."

"Did you think I didn't know how that old man doted on you while only looking at you?"

"..."

"Now I'll really kill you. Sticking out your tongue uglily like our mom and dad!"

Choke

"Ugh... kuh...!"

Tightening windpipe

The slippery feel of black leather gloves was felt on her neck.

Perhaps it was slippery not because of the leather, but because of blood.

"Ah, what a shame. I can only see this for a few minutes."

"Kuk...!"

"Hehehe, don't even dream of coming back to life, because I'll take your Glass Star and corpse."

Let's wander in hell together forever, Sister.

This world is destined for destruction anyway.

'Anna...'

In her gradually darkening consciousness, Sumire apologized in her heart to the girl she followed. And also to everyone who had trusted and followed her, the Council, and Kaede.

'I'm... sorry.'

"I can't let that happen!!"

Ratatatatatatata!!

Anna turned around at the baptism of machine gun fire cutting through the darkness. There, a mixed-race girl wearing a flight jacket was running urgently, panting and deploying a machine gun.

"Who are you? Did you already come back to life after having your neck cut?"

"No."

Rena pointed at her own neck with her thumb.

Slightly misaligned skin.

As Rena said, it looked like her completely severed head had been forcibly reattached using healing.

"Kohane reattached it before I completely died."

"You're completely crazy."

"More than you?"

Baaaang!!

Armor dropping from the silver ship floating in the sky.

[Quick revival!! Get your hands off the boss!!]

Vroom—

A neon orange bike approaching rapidly from far away.

"Bo-Boss!! It's dangerous!!"

When Anna narrowed her eyes at the girls who had come back from death and turned back to Sumire.

"Ninja art, substitution technique."

Instead of Sumire, there was a girl lying down wearing a black sailor uniform with a dark green muffler.

"Damn it! Nameless? I killed everyone!"

"I am no longer Nameless."

"Stop talking nonsense and die!!"

Thud!

The dagger Anna swung down hit a hard log instead of the girl's soft skin.

The girl who disappeared with dark green mist declared from far away while supporting Sumire:

"I am the magical girl of [Envy], an ugly magical girl who envies freedom. Now that I look at you, you seem quite free too, so I'm envious."

"What did you just say?"

Anna frowned at the ridiculous words, but Kaede paid no attention.

It was meant to be annoying from the start anyway.

"Ka...ede, thank you."

"It's nothing, Miss."

Anna didn't like the minions who had come running to interfere with her revenge.

[Revenge] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Mountains of Corpses, Seas of Blood

Revenge is only completed through death.

She desires the death of all who stand in its way.

Swish—!!

Blood-red energy rose from all the land where Anna, strengthened as a guardian, stood, becoming a huge river.

"I'll kill you all."

Chapter 108 : Wisteria Flowers

The death of Uncle's family came suddenly.

So much so that even the people smoking behind the funeral hall sighed deeply in regret.

"Haah... How did he get involved with a violent organization... to die in such a cruel way. I hear the young miss is completely missing."

"...Hey, do you believe that?"

"What? He died because he got involved with foreign criminal organizations due to the pachinko business."

"The young master who studied abroad would never do pachinko!"

The bald man who quickly stubbed out his cigarette spoke in a whisper.

"The young master opposed the large-scale merger and acquisition of the Fujimoto Group this time...!"

"Why? Fujimoto has successfully completed aggressive M&As and become a completely invincible family, right? Even the government has already sided with Fujimoto."

"Idiot, then there's no place for other companies to stand! The young master wanted Japan to become a free country! Not a Fujimoto dictatorship!"

"I-I don't know much about politics or economics."

"Geez. The young master had such a broad vision."

They didn't know that the small girl standing silently behind the smoking area had heard everything they said.

"That's right. I killed him."

"Wh-why, Father?!"

"Because he tried to divide Fujimoto. Because he was a traitor who secretly joined hands with those opposing Fujimoto."

"Even so!"

"Sumire."

"..."

"You, just listen to what I say."

"..."

Eiji spoke one word at a time as he put his hand on Sumire's shoulder.

It felt like the blood flowing from that hand had stained Sumire.

It felt like Sumire herself was already soaked in that blood.

She couldn't say anything more.

She just believed that atonement was protecting as many people as possible within her abilities.

Until she saw a girl's broadcast.

"Anna!!"

"Sister!!"

Clang—!!

Two blades clashing.

A blade imbued with lavender energy and a blade shining blood-red collided with a chilling sound and became entangled.

Dripping sticky blood-red energy from the tip, the blood-red blade

seemed like it would greedily swallow the lavender blade as if licking it.

Anna approached with her eyes wide open, blood-red and reddish-brown chaotically intertwined in her pupils.

"Sister!!!"

Crunch

Sumire gradually pushed back.

Anna approaching while flicking her tongue.

The two sisters slowly pushed into the blood-red river, spilling sticky energy between their blades.

Splash!

A river made of blood.

Anna's black clothes and Sumire's kimono were completely soaked in blood, clinging to their bodies.

"Sister, sister, sister, sister, sister, sister, sister, sister, sister, sister!!!"

"Kugh?!"

"Don't worry!! Let's go to hell together!! To the hell where Mom and Dad are waiting!! Because now everyone that Fujimoto ruled over will die!!"

"I can't... allow that!"

Sumire wanted to push Anna away with a big swing, but from the blood-red river domain deployed earlier, the more she attacked Anna, the more wounds appeared.

One damage dealt, two wounds returned.

A space where to attack Anna, one must endure twice the damage.

By the time the girls who had come running to save Sumire realized

this, they had already been severely injured.

But Rena deployed a machine gun with her hands riddled with holes like a beehive and fired at Anna.

Ratatatatatatata!!

Squelch

Squelch

Squelch

For every bullet that hit, blood spurted and exploded from Rena's other hand.

Rena, who could no longer raise both arms due to the returned damage, collapsed from the shock.

"Kuhuugh!!"

"Ahahaha!! Keep shooting!! Want to bet who dies first? How dare you interfere in Fujimoto's affairs? Hahaha!"

Anna mocked Rena with eyes rolled back completely white.

'At this rate, I'll be completely pushed back by Anna... more people might get involved.'

Sumire looked at the salon members and Kaede who were continuing to check Anna while enduring wounds.

The moment they land even a small attack on Anna, she instantly recovers while wrapping herself in reddish-brown energy, and the person who attacked receives the damage in return.

[Boss!! It's dangerous!!]

Bang—!!

When the armor spewed fire, the impact returned and it crumpled.

"Boss!!"

Vroom!!

When the bike approached leading starlight, it toppled over from that same impact.

"Miss!!"

Squelch!

When the ninja scattered throwing knives imbued with dark green energy, they stabbed into his own body.

Crumpled armor.

Toppled bike.

Collapsed ninja.

Despite how boldly they had shouted and charged in.

Everyone, including herself, was helplessly being defeated by Anna.

Sumire recalled the first appearance of the salon members and Kaede, with whom she had lived and worked closely for nearly a year.

Rena, Kohane, and Nanami who spewed out anger like children as soon as they gained power.

Kaede whose first realized emotion was 'envy'.

And the Fujimoto heir who could have ruined everything.

'They really are such losers.'

The girl who helped them help others.

The more they walked a new path following that girl, the more they interacted with numerous people and exchanged numerous emotions.

They went around handling things and incidents that Sumire could never have imagined in her lifetime.

Sumire's world had now become incomparably broader than the

world she had learned as a Fujimoto lady.

The fate of [Protection] approached in Sumire Fujimoto's way, not the Fujimoto way.

A world where she lives together with all ordinary people as a guardian, not a ruler. There, Sumire was a magical girl no different from any ordinary magical girl.

A world she had seen and her sister had not.

"Sister!!! Die!!!"

Anna was still trapped in the Fujimoto world.

A girl obsessed with revenge was grinding her teeth inside the sea of blood and mountains of corpses that her father had ruthlessly cut down. That girl was now trying to drag in even innocent people, no longer satisfied with just herself and her father.

If they can't stop the obelisk, soldiers will endlessly pour out.

If they can't kill the guardian of the obelisk, they can't destroy it.

"..."

Then as a sister, as [Protection], what must be done is.

A resolute will.

"Kohane!! I'll stop Anna!! Please take care of destroying the obelisk!!"

[Boss?! What...?]

"Kaede!! Take care of everything else!!"

"Miss?!"

If what she wants is her death, she will gladly give it.

Even if she loses even the light of her lavender Glass Star to never revive again in the hell her sister has unleashed.

For the ordinary tomorrow of innocent people.

She sacrifices her ordinary life to protect.

Even if the Fujimoto blood cannot continue, those who try to protect ordinary people will continue to appear.

Sumire leaves behind the will of [Protection], not the Fujimoto name.

'Even if it's not me, it will definitely continue!'

Sumire embraced Anna and interlocked her fingers.

"Ugh?!"

"Then let's go together, Anna!"

In the moment Anna was surprised by the sudden approach, Sumire threw herself into the blood-red river.

Splash!

'Perhaps this is for the best.'

Like wisteria that kills living things with poison.

Like wisteria that can only live on walls.

The wisteria flower, Fujimoto, scattering lavender petals while ruling over others, completely disappears from today.

[Protection] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Thousand Spears, Ten Thousand Swords

Tsutsutsutsu!!

Countless lavender spears and swords entered the river, piercing through Sumire and Anna as they slowly sank.

Squelch!

Squelch!

Squelch!

For every wound Anna receives, Sumire receives two wounds.

Still, the lavender swords and spears pouring like rain did not stop.

They will not stop until both are completely pulverized and disappear.

"...!!!"

Sumire and Anna's blood mixed chaotically in the blood-red river.

-I'll kill you!! Fujimoto Eiji!!

-Everything ruled by Fujimoto!!

-Sister, why are you still so happy!!

-Daughter of a murderer!! Murderers!! I'll kill you!!

-I'll become a murderer too and pay you back!!

The blood-red river domain of the magical girl of [Revenge] was filled with Anna's countless resentments and miseries.

Two giant skeletons in suits and elegant dresses approached from far away.

'Uncle, Aunt...'

-Fujimoto Eiji!!

-Bring us back to life!! Evil ruler!!

Squelch!

Squelch!

Squelch!

Two huge blades pierced through Sumire's chest.

Father's karma came to Sumire as revenge.

'I'm sorry.'

Tsutsutsutsu!

Sumire clung to her fading consciousness and poured out countless lavender blades.

Anna, watching Sumire, stabbed countless daggers into her own chest.

But the force behind the stabbing daggers gradually decreased.

Tsutsutsutsu!

Mixing blood, pouring swords, and swinging spears.

In the midst of it, the last two girls bearing the Fujimoto name were rushing towards death.

Sumire thought this was fortunate.

Because Anna's revenge was solely directed at her, she didn't even think of stopping the salon members left behind to stop the obelisk.

[Hypocrite!! How long are you going to pretend to be noble!! Die!!]

Swinging dagger

-Die, daughter of Fujimoto Eiji!!

-You lived well on our blood!!

Swoosh—

In the blood-red river, Sumire smiled unsteadily with her completely severed left arm and leg.

'Thank goodness...'

No one else will be hurt in the name of Fujimoto.

Father died from his own karma, so next is Sumire herself.

From now on, Sumire alone just has to endure the coming pain.

[Anna.]

Sumire embraced her sister, who was endlessly stabbing her chest, with her one remaining arm.

Her sister, who she finally met but couldn't control herself while harming innocent people.

Becoming her companion on the road to hell would be the minimum atonement.

[Die!! Hundreds, thousands of those who lived under the Fujimoto name will die!!]

[Then tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of those with the will of protection will save them.]

[...What?]

[Don't drag other people into your revenge anymore. I'll take it all.]

Sumire stroked Anna's face with her one remaining hand.

Though she had matured, somehow she looked like the face she saw that day in the wisteria garden.

The two girls born under the wisteria flowers will now atone endlessly suffering in hell.

[I'm sorry.]

[...Don't.]

[I'm sorry I didn't understand.]

[I said don't!!]

[Let's die together.]

[...]

[I'll die with you.]

[...]

[You were lonely.]

[...]

[I'm sorry.]

Before they knew it, they had sunk to the darkest bottom of the river.

The two girls, battered by the countless swords and spears that had poured from above, could only weakly overlap their bodies.

Beyond her slowly closing eyes, Sumire saw some lavender flowers.

Violets.

Violets with the same name as herself.

Humility

Sincerity

Ordinariness

'I wanted to be... like a violet, not a wisteria flower.'

[Sister.]

[Yes?]

[Didn't you know?]

[No. I knew. But I was too scared to do anything.]

[...]

Scared of Father.

Scared of the world outside Fujimoto.

Just doing as told.

[Are you not scared now?]

[No, I'm scared. I'm so scared of the world I don't know.]

[I see.]

An answer that came out honestly because she lived as Sumire... something she would never have done as a Fujimoto. Hearing that, Anna stabbed down with her dagger one last time, cutting off the arm Sumire was embracing her with.

Sumire, numbed by countless experiences of pain, opened her eyes wide in surprise at that action.

[Then this is my last revenge.]

[What... is this?]

Sumire, with her limbs severed, rising helplessly to the surface, was terrified.

[If dying peacefully is easier, then live like that for the rest of your life.]

[What? What do you mean!]

[Look at me. Remember everyone who died miserably under the Fujimoto name.]

Her blood-red eyes contained hatred, anger, and emptiness. The faintest light shining among them was love.

[Live in fear in nightmares forever while protecting a doomed world.]

Anna slit her own throat with the one remaining arm out of her four limbs.

A blood-red Glass Star rose from her limp body.

Goodbye.

Beloved sister.

Daughter of the person I hate most.

May you live in pain for the rest of your life.

As the world of the girl full of revenge ended beneath the dark river where Sumire was floating up.

Only after there was no one left to carry on the Fujimoto name.

Violets began to bloom in Sumire's world.

Among the lavender violets blooming one by one.

She decided to live forever as 'Sumire', not Fujimoto... as the magical girl of [Protection].

Uncle

Aunt

Father

Sister

A world where everyone has died and disappeared.

A world where only Sumire remains.

Along with emptiness, the true fate of [Protection] bloomed.

-Boss!! Grab my hand!!

-Boss!!

-Bo-Boss!!!

-Miss!!

In the river of emptiness, Sumire could only rise helplessly and cry.

Chapter 109 : The Story I Started

[Confirmed defeat of Guardian Agamemnon!!]

[Confirmed destruction of the fifth obelisk!!]

[Guardian Odysseus defeat complete!]

[Confirmed destruction of the third obelisk!!]

[Guardian Hector defeat complete!!]

[Confirmed destruction of all obelisks!!]

[Walpurgis team advancing while clearing demons in the city center!]

Hope was in sight.

"Oraaah!!"

"Captain!! You're getting cheers!"

"Thank you! Kyoko!"

Baaaaaaang!!

The force contained in the punch thrown by the green-haired girl as she swung her silver light armor.

A single punch spread out to a hundred meters away, shattering everything in front.

"■■■■!!"

Far away, Artemis, the idol of faith who was gathering huge power while aiming an arrow, hurriedly dodged the punch filled with green force.

Swoosh—

The goddess shining her reddish-brown bow larger than her body moved quickly like moonlight, looking for the next firing position.

"Where are you dodging!!"

"Be obedient and get caught!"

Woong—

Receiving the energy of cheers spreading from the orange flag, the green giant who could now move further leapt and stretched a thousand arms forward.

"Arhat God Fist!!"

A thousand fists were simultaneously fired forward to match Ichika's extended fist.

The sight of a thousand huge green fists simultaneously extending towards the reddish-brown goddess.

It was an overwhelming sight like a huge green rainbow appearing in the sky.

Boom-boom-boom-boom-boom—!!

Artemis, who had been dodging in and out between the countless extended fists, was finally hit by a few of the thousand fists.

Every time a fist that must have been tens of meters in size struck Artemis's slender body, the air rang and caused fierce winds.

Thud!

Thud!

Thud!

Artemis, who was shot down with a sound like dynamite exploding at every hit spot between the barrage of fists. The enemy who had threatened Ichika by firing huge arrows of light fell.

"Not yet!! It's a waste to stop here!!"

Ichika shouted while twisting her whole body to control the green giant.

Guooooo!!!

Hundreds of fists that had missed Artemis were guided by Ichika to draw large trajectories and shoot out again towards the idols nearby.

Goooo—

"The rest of you...! Eat this!!"

"■■■■■■!!!"

Kwaaaaa!!

A storm of huge green fists descended upon Apollo and Ares, who had been struggling to continue their charge while chasing the yellow meteor.

Though they were caught off guard by the sudden massive strike, Apollo and Ares were caught by the yellow Milky Way extending from the yellow meteor and took the green storm head-on.

Thud!

Thud!

Thud!

Thud!

Thud!

Apollo and Ares were slowly falling in the endless storm of destruction.

The two huge idols were falling miserably to the distant ground.

The three idols that had been endlessly driving Ichika and Kyoko back until just now were cleared in one fell swoop by the joint attack.

"Nice!!! Sato kiddo!!"

"Sato!! Well done!"

Kyoko and Ichika gave a thumbs up towards the thousands of yellow meteors dazzlingly embroidering the red sky.

"Yeah! Thanks for the help! Ichika! Kyoko!"

Hana, who had been racing through the sky like a meteor surrounded by dazzling yellow flashes, briefly decelerated and gave a thumbs up with one hand on her hip.

My heart pounded as I watched that scene.

'Ichika! Kyoko! Hana!'

And another girl who came to help by my side.

"This time we'll definitely win!!"

"..."

Red and reddish-brown flames clashing.

Though the two clearly had incomparable powers.

Yuki's desperation, having glimpsed the destruction of this world, helped make the fight possible.

Clang!!

Whoosh!!

"Ugh...!"

I leapt through Yuki's flame barrier that was slowly being pushed back and charged with my silver scythe extended.

I met eyes with Animus, who was expressionlessly spewing reddish-brown flames beyond the huge burning wall of flames.

"..."

The magical girl of [Conquest] summoned idols containing divinity whenever gaps appeared in the battle, and Hana and I were continuing a difficult fight with the idols that had now grown to four.

-Hikari!!

-Leader!!

-Leader!!

Comrades joining with news of victory heard amidst the battle.

My friends.

Precious ones.

With their joining, we were finally able to continue a completely equal fight.

All obelisks destroyed.

Black lion demons gradually disappeared.

The flame of hope burned brilliantly in my heart.

"Animus!!!"

"...[Deception]."

Swish—!

I endlessly slashed with the rotational force of the scythe leaving huge silver afterimages as large as the burning hope.

I swung with enough force to completely cover the view with silver afterimages.

With enough force to cut through and approach even if there was a

wall hundreds of meters high.

Swoosh—!

Shak—!

Endless combo attacks.

Endless charges.

The will contained in the silver afterimages completely spread out in a fan shape was firm, charging to cut down the reddish-brown girl with the alias of [War] and [Conquest] along with infinite starlight.

"Hikari!"

"Hikari-chan!"

Hana and Yuki approaching.

Yellow meteors and red flames blazed as they extended helping hands through my silver combo attacks.

Flaming arrows being fired.

Yellow meteors pouring down.

Yellow

Red

Silver

All colors intertwined and shot towards the strongest apostle who had dominated the battlefield.

Flash!

Whoosh—

Animus, who had been fluttering her reddish-brown cape, stopped dodging and halted in midair.

Perhaps judging she couldn't avoid all the attacks rushing towards her.

Spot!

Boooom!

For the first time in close combat, Animus extended her reddish-brown great sword and slashed while spinning it like a windmill.

For the first time since starting this fight dozens of minutes ago, Animus was in a state where she couldn't change her attack trajectory in close combat.

I didn't miss that opening.

"Hah..."

"Haah!!"

I dodged between the trajectory of the reddish-brown great sword swinging like a windmill and swung my silver scythe.

Cause and effect reversal achieved by pouring out all starlight.

Endless faith sent by those who believe me to be the successor of the goddess.

Endless wishes sent by those who think of me as the first magical girl.

Respect sent by girls who think of me as their leader.

Infinite starlight.

I swung containing all of that to deceive the world filled with the goddesses' curses.

"Haaaah!!"

A possibility that couldn't be found among countless existing possibilities.

Miracle

Victory

＜Animus's reddish-brown great sword is cut by my silver scythe.＞

Spot—!

My eyes met Animus's through the debris of the intersecting silver scythe and reddish-brown great sword. Because it was the moment I had longed for so much, I exploded the starlight I had gathered on the scales through the gap that stretched like eternity.

Gooooo!!

Pouring blessings.

And I discard the silver scythe to draw and swing a silver sword.

A moment so brief it's hard to even blink.

To create our story.

I swung the silver sword.

"I'll win!!!"

"Hup!"

Baaaaang!!!

The debris of the reddish-brown great sword and silver sword colliding.

But Animus could no longer parry with a relaxed attitude.

"Uwaaaaaa!!!"

"Haaaah!!"

The first true test of strength between her and me.

Baaang!!!

"Huaaaaaaaa!!!"

"Haaaaah!!!"

Colorful starlight poured out explosively, endlessly scattering behind me.

Likewise, reddish-brown flames poured out explosively, endlessly scattering behind Animus.

Like a butterfly with different colored wings on each side.

We faced each other while scattering huge starlight.

Crack

Crackle

Crunch

Our two unique weapons cracking.

I rode that momentum to push my sword further towards her chest.

Animus flashed her reddish-brown eyes and shouted.

"Open, Hall of War!!!"

"I can't allow that!!!"

Guuung—

Far away, the sky palace that hadn't opened until now opened and countless soldiers poured out.

The idols we had defeated until now revived and charged towards us.

Ares

Athena

Apollo

Artemis

Countless reddish-brown soldiers

"[redacted]!!"

"[redacted]!!"

"[redacted]!!"

But they couldn't interfere in the fight between Animus and me.

Because just as Animus brought out idols and soldiers, there were comrades who had followed me this far.

"Hikari-chan!! Don't worry and fight!!"

"Hikari!! Let's win!!"

"Leader!! I'll take care of this side!!"

"Uwaaaa!! Everyone do your best!"

I shouted with fighting spirit while hearing all the cheers.

"I'll wiiiin!!"

Crunch

My and Animus's swords completely shattered.

Animus and I discarded our swords.

Thud

A step forward.

Flash!

Whole body burning with starlight.

Swoosh!

Fists swung containing colorful starlight and reddish-brown starlight.

"I'll wiiiiin!!!"

"Haaaaaaah!!!"

Two fists pass by each other in the air and advance towards each other's faces.

Two magical girls who rose to save humanity advance holding their respective beliefs.

They advance believing their own paths are right.

Belief

Resolution

Determination

Final battle

Duel

Everything flashes through my mind

And what resounds in my heart is a huge wave.

Booooooooom—!!

Chapter 110 : The Story I Started

Rumble—

The sound of destruction heard from afar.

Another building collapses.

"■■■■■!!!"

"■■■■■!!!"

Reddish-brown soldiers and black lions pushing through the debris, roaring and indiscriminately searching for people to massacre.

It's been a long time since thoughts of economic losses or damage recovery disappeared from Yamashita's mind. It was because a few of them were already chasing him.

Step

Step

Step

"■■■■■!!!"

Acrid smoke and the heat of flames tickle his cheeks through the burning city.

He moves his two legs frantically and runs forward.

"Uwaaaaa!!!"

The police notebook, handcuffs, and gun in his pocket feel as heavy

as a thousand pounds, giving the illusion that they're grabbing his ankles.

Step

Step

Step

Though he's running until he's out of breath, that sound shows no sign of getting farther away.

"Huff! Hah..."

Under the red sky, in a landscape where everything seems like it will burn to an end.

Yamashita was running frantically through a residential area.

'I must be crazy!!'

After reviving the dead magical girls.

The magical girl of [Beginning], who the national agencies had instructed to respond to as a kind of god-like being, though they didn't show it outwardly.

The magical girl of [Beginning] asked Tokyo citizens to evacuate, staking everything she had built up.

To prepare for the day of destruction she had strongly argued for since the beginning of this year, they had barely managed to establish an evacuation order for Tokyo residents by mobilizing all of Elysion's capabilities, but.

"Uwaaaa!! Save me!!"

"What's going on?!"

"I, I don't want to die!!"

There were too many citizens remaining in the residential areas, ignoring the order to go to shelters. And lions and soldiers attacking

them.

Bang! Bang!

Citizens in crisis.

Warning shots fired unconsciously.

"You damn things!! Come over here!!"

Yamashita was luring those attacking the citizens while running away.

Logically, he should have sent an emergency radio message to Tsugumi, the magical girl of [Order] leading the security team and focusing on relief activities, and observed. Or he should have driven a security team bus and transported as many citizens as possible.

Why on earth was he doing such a foolish thing.

'Has my head turned into a flower garden from eating and sleeping with magical girls?'

He's just a powerless ordinary person.

What's happening under this red sky is beyond his control.

He should have just stayed at the Metropolitan Police Department's special countermeasures headquarters as a radio operator.

As he was running while thinking all sorts of things, Yamashita saw a ruined house in front of him.

Grrrr...

Ruins where a black lion that had just finished its destructive activity was casually leaving.

'If it's already achieved its purpose, it won't come back!'

Swish!!

Yamashita slid further than he ever did in high school baseball and

desperately crawled into the debris.

"..."

He covered his mouth and lay flat, quietly watching outside.

Step

Step

Step

The soldiers that had been chasing him until just now look around and then disappear down the road in front of the residential area.

The chilling footsteps fade away.

He survived.

"Whew..."

"Kyaaaaaaa!!!"

"...What?!"

"Save me!!"

"■■■■■!!!"

A woman's scream.

A black lion's roar.

Yamashita's breathing quickens and his heart starts pounding madly.

He should send a radio message to Tsugumi now.

No, what use would sending a radio message be now.

It can't be helped, rushing out would only lead to mutual suicide.

Thump—Thump—

What on earth should he do in this situation?

Is there anything Yamashita can do?

Thump—Thump—

In time flowing like eternity with each second, Yamashita suddenly looked at the watch on his wrist.

The watch his ex-girlfriend bought him as a birthday present in college.

-Tadayoshi, why do you want to become a police officer?

Politician. Lawyer.

Having graduated from Tokyo University's law department, he could have gone anywhere.

'Why did I want to become a police officer?'

A childish dream forgotten under the ambition to become the Superintendent General of the Metropolitan Police.

A dream held by a bookworm who knew nothing of reality.

-Because among high-ranking officials, those who work hardest to protect people are...

"...police officers."

-I'll become a high-ranking person who protects people!

"The duty... of police is."

[Protecting citizens is the natural duty of the police!]

Yamashita ran out just like that.

Dozens of black lions had gathered at the intersection of the residential area, surrounding children and pregnant women who were belatedly evacuating, making chilling howls.

Black lions gathered like cockroaches on an abandoned warehouse wall, when even one would be difficult to handle.

"■■■■■!!!"

"■■■■■!!!"

Yamashita fired at them.

"Look over here!!"

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Clink

The bullets bounced off with a weak sound, but dozens of gazes suddenly focused on Yamashita at the unexpected attack.

Dozens of pairs of eyes full of killing intent and hostility look at Yamashita.

He will die now.

Accepting that fact, Yamashita shouted loudly.

"Citizens!! The police are here!! Please evacuate with peace of mind!!"

"Hiiiii!!"

The woman, covered in tears and snot, grabbed the children's hands with trembling hands and hurriedly ran away.

"■■■■■!!!"

As the black lions started looking back at their screams, Yamashita fired his gun at them. But each time the bullets hit, they just bounced off with a futile sound.

Bang! Bang! Tick!

The sound of the slide moving, completely empty of bullets.

'Ah...'

Rather, there was no fear.

Yamashita slowly relaxed his shooting posture and faced the lions approaching him.

After a while of frantic communication, Tsugumi's voice began to be heard from the radio.

[Superintendent Yamashita!! What are you doing!!]

"..."

[Superintendent Yamashita?]

Even now, Tsugumi must be saving many people as a magical girl.

It's not an adult's job to interfere with what this simple but righteous girl is doing.

"There's... no problem. Miss Ishikawa."

[Superintendent Yamashita! Call me Team Leader during work hours!]

"I hope Miss Ishikawa continues to live righteously. It was an honor to work with you."

[Wh-what? What kind of words that sound like a will...!]

"I'm sure you'll be an excellent police officer..."

Baaaang—!!

In the distance, the sound of two magical girls with transcendent powers fighting can be heard.

Yamashita prayed with a detached mind as he watched it.

That the magical girl of [Beginning] would be able to win.

That the world of humans would not end today.

Perhaps Yamashita had started living as a real police officer since he faced her at the Odaiba broadcasting station.

[Ugh! I couldn't hear well because of the surrounding noise! Superintendent Yamashita!! I'll come over there...!]

Yamashita put down the radio with a despondent heart.

"■■■!!!"

"Haha."

If I had known this would happen, I should have proposed to my ex-girlfriend instead of breaking up.

Yamashita closed his eyes.

Lions charged.

Approaching footsteps were heard.

And a girl's voice.

"Superintendent Yamashitaaaa!!!"

"Miss Ishikawa?"

Swish!!

A navy blue police line appeared to drive away the lions, and a girl with a serious expression fell from the sky. The black lions were scattering in panic from the starlight contained in the navy blue bullets she was firing.

Bang! Bang!

"■■■!!!!"

Woong—

Tsugumi landed beside Yamashita with dust.

There were a few tears in her eyes shining strongly under her thick

eyebrows.

"Don't say such things! Even as a joke!! Hurry and evacuate from here!!"

"...Hahaha."

"Observatory!! There's one civilian isolated hereeee!!"

"Not a civilian."

"Huh?"

"...A police officer like you."

Yamashita said, a little embarrassed but proudly.

"Team Leader. Let's save people together."

Tsugumi was so happy and reassured by those words that she smiled brightly.

"Yes!! Superintendent Yamashita is a police officer!! My proud subordinate!!"

* * *

In the shelter set up in the open space of Elysion, tens of thousands of people watched the battle of magical girls being transmitted above the sky with bated breath.

"God..."

"Please...!"

The prophecy uttered by the magical girl of [Beginning] had come true.

"Goddess!! Please!!"

"Holy maiden of salvation!! Please save us!!"

Now people were just praying that the holy maiden who had risen to

save them would win the battle.

Demons falling like rain under the red sky.

Gods mocking human fate.

Unreasonable enemies that all the technology humans had built up was useless against.

They heard that even the military and police were being overwhelmed without being able to do anything.

"Ugh... it's over."

"Are we all going to die like this?"

"Why is this happening."

People despairing.

An old man entered among them who had their heads bowed.

"Stop saying such negative things and have some of this."

"Wh-what?!"

- A savory smell. Corn soup.

"When people have negative thoughts, they should drink something warm."

"...Thank you."

Slurp

Because of the taste of the warm and soft soup going down his throat.

The anxiety that had risen calmed down and the desire to live grew.

The Master looked up at the sky while serving corn soup to many people.

"..."

In the screen floating like a kaleidoscope in the sky above Elysion.

The girl who started all this was fighting desperately, swinging her fists.

"Please... win and come back."

Hikari

Kyoko

My beloved daughters.

The Master felt like the lights in the screen were becoming entangled and gradually turning white.

Chapter 111 : The Story I Started

Baaaang—

Every time fists cross, the inevitable explosion and pain.

Because if we give the opponent even a moment's gap, they could heal or use a technique.

Animus and I didn't back down, pounding each other with endlessly bursting starlight.

Rising fist

Falling face

Flickering vision

Baaaang—

We exchanged attacks once again, spraying blood into the air.

"Ugh!!"

"Kuhk!!"

Hair completely disheveled and fluttering, capes torn and tattered.

Bloody saliva dripping from our mouths, fists battered with bones rattling.

Still, we continued attacking each other.

I for tomorrow.

She for today.

We for humanity.

We continued a fight we absolutely couldn't give up.

"Huup—!"

"Hoo!!"

Goooo—

An even deeper reddish-brown energy.

An ominous low sound like a lion threatening burst out.

Something ominous flashes between Animus's punches.

'This time is different!!'

I hurriedly tried to block it with cause and effect reversal in the gap of throwing a punch, but I couldn't avoid Animus's punch and we exchanged attacks just like that.

Exchanged attacks as they were.

Thud—

Animus didn't even try to avoid the fist stuck in her face.

Thwack!

Her eye completely burst, taking my fist head-on.

Flowing blood, completely lost vision.

Animus didn't care and put strength into it just like that.

"Haaaah!!"

Her fist pierced through all barriers and starlight, completely burying itself in my stomach.

Splurt

Blood flowed out like a bucket being poured, along with pain incomparable to anything so far.

"Kuhah...!!"

Pain that made it impossible to breathe came, and my flickering vision gradually darkened.

Thwack!

Animus withdrew her fist, pulled out with blood spurting like a fountain, and watched me.

I couldn't control my body shaking from the impact and gradually darkening vision.

All the muscles in my body turned to stone and wouldn't move, my hands and feet became icy cold.

Even my lungs wouldn't listen to me, moving on their own and interfering with my breathing.

"Huk, huh...?!"

"Hoo... hoo...!"

Watching me falter for a moment, Animus finally cast her unique skill through the gap that had formed. The reddish-brown starlight gathering around her, the 4 stars risen behind her back emitted a brilliant halo.

[Conquest] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Divine Manifestation

Descent of Idols

"Descend upon my body!! Divinity!! Mother of the high mountains, Cybele!!!"

Whoosh!

With Animus's shout, reddish-brown flames blazed and took the form of two lions.

"■■■■■!!!"

The two lions each had power that wouldn't lose even compared to idols.

Reddish-brown starlight exploded amidst the lions' roars.

The hundreds of meters wide cracks that opened every time idols were summoned didn't open, but the energy surrounding Animus was emitting a more intense power than ever before.

Flutter—

Animus threw away her cape that had become tattered from the fight. Reddish-brown energy burst out like a storm behind her back, creating a shape like huge wings.

The 4 stars floating above her head now shone so brilliantly they looked like a crown rather than a halo.

The surroundings where Yuki's group was fighting became a huge sea with reddish-brown waves surging.

"■■■■■!!!"

"■■■■■!!!"

The roars of the two lion forms.

Overwhelming energy of destruction.

Rising divinity.

"At this moment."

Animus was burning her entire body like a goddess descended onto the battlefield.

The divinity faintly felt from the fake idols she had borrowed power from until now.

"I am equal to the 'Three Goddesses'."

Burning all of her power

Forcibly borrowing power from the will of the stars.

Gathering everything beyond herself.

The magical girl of [Conquest] had become a goddess and was brilliantly emitting that divinity.

"..."

I watched that while healing the hole pierced in my abdomen.

Animus was charging with the two lion forms wrapped around her arms.

"Here I come!! Successor of the goddess!! Stop!! Me!!"

Why does she want me to win rather than defeating me?

The huge divinity surrounding Animus.

Looking at the divinity that felt the same as what I felt from the red broadcast and poured curses, it finally seemed like everything was connecting.

This is the trial Animus is giving me.

The trial of evolution.

The true trial that surpasses <Magical Girl HAZARD>.

Goddess

Divinity

Power of stars

Will of stars

Daughter of the world

Will of the world

"The fourth star is... beyond the world."

The gateway to becoming a god.

I took out the colorless Glass Star while pondering the realization dawning in my mind.

In the moment of realization.

Animus's movements approaching from afar seemed to make time flow slowly.

"..."

The colorless Glass Star.

A gift from the goddess of [Beginning].

The thing that had supported me since the first day I came to this world.

The thing that made it possible for me to be who I am now.

The thing that allowed ordinary me to go further than the goddess of [Beginning].

From here on is what even the goddess of [Beginning] didn't know.

What the magical girl of [War] discovered by burning herself and deceiving the will of the stars.

The realm I need to realize.

Crack

I started putting strength into my hand holding the colorless Glass Star.

Cracks extending from the corner of the Glass Star.

White lines appearing with precarious sounds.

Crack

"I am a magical girl."

The gradually growing cracks slowly split the surface of the Glass Star, creating small facets. In them, my dreams shining in all colors were now reflected.

All the moments I had walked until now were reflected between the cracks of the small Glass Star.

"I am a magical girl who protects everyone."

A Milky Way made of brilliant starlights beyond description, gradually starting to shine more and more as I advanced bit by bit, surpassing rainbows.

There are those who believed in me and entrusted their dreams to me.

There are those who entered my world.

Hana's swiftness, Haruko's fairy tale, Ichika's freedom, Kyoko's cheering, Sumire's protection, Dorim's cyberbrain, Saebyeok's duty, Nayeon's sea, Yeonseo's dream, Yuki's flame, Lihua's lightning, Natasha's navigation, Alisa's death, Divine Maiden's revelation, Iris's wings...

Starlights that have become too numerous to even recall in my mind now.

My world that has expanded that much.

"I will save this world."

The goddess of [Beginning] satisfied with today and [War] living today fiercely.

The possibility to go further than the dreams they had found.

"And return to my original world."

Crack—!

Scattering colorful energy.

The colorless Glass Star completely shattered and disappeared.

What rose were 4 lights.

A huge world that had embraced everyone.

Inside me was a world embracing all magical girls.

A moment that felt like eternity.

Animus, who had become the goddess of [Conquest], charges with the energy emitted by the two lions wrapped around both arms.

"Whew."

I watched that and threw away my now tattered cape behind me.

Flutter—

Now in front of the charging goddess of [Conquest] is just a girl in black and white clothes.

A girl who could accept all colors because she had no color.

"Haaaah!!!"

"Magical Girl of Swiftness Unique Skill... Flash Girl...!"

Colorful energy envelops my body.

Swoosh—!!

I felt like I had entered a world of swiftness, entering a time where even light had stopped.

"Magical Girl of Freedom Unique Skill... Free World!!"

Boooom!!

A huge colorful goddess's arm appeared over my extended arm and shot towards the goddess of [Conquest].

"Magical Girl of Flame Unique Skill!! Red Flower!!"

Whoosh—!!

Gentle flames enveloping my whole body became a huge power supporting me.

In the time that started flowing again, the overlapping 3 unique skills and reddish-brown energy collided, making a huge sound.

Boooooooooom—

In the midst of it, Animus flashed her reddish-brown eyes and prepared her next attack.

I was no longer afraid of that attack.

"Hup!!"

"Haah!!"

Because in the fist I was extending were contained the dreams of all the magical girls I had met until now.

"Magical Girl of Protection Unique Skill!! Thousand Spears, Ten Thousand Swords!!"

Tsutsutsutsu!!

Countless swords and spears wrapped in colorful rainbows were deployed from the sky above. They approached ignoring me and aiming only for Animus.

Tsutsutsutsu!!

Rain made only of starlight fell towards her.

"Ugh!!"

Animus's breath faltered at the enormous amount of swords and

spears, and she wrapped herself with her two wings for protection.

"Cyberbrain World!! Morale Surge!!"

Huge goddess avatars that had existed only in my imagination appeared and began attacking Animus while receiving colorful energy.

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

Countless goddess forms were pounding on Animus's wings.

I leapt in between them and prepared my next attack.

"Haaaah!!"

At this moment.

I have become the world.

Chapter 112 : Magical Girl of Myriad Colors

In a space where starlight of all colors is entangled, I feel numerous dreams.

On the ground shining with primordial gold, filled only with happiness, the stars there despaired in endless boredom.

On the ground filled with navy blue death, the stars worship and sing of death.

On the ground filled with reddish-brown war, the stars advance revering heroes and glory.

On the ground filled with black plague, the stars that sent away all gods became infinitely weak.

The final era of humanity set by the three goddesses is an era of destruction.

An era where everything returns to nothingness.

The goddess of [Beginning] wanted a dust-like hope settled in nothingness.

A silver age living in the final paradise protected by the apostle of [Deception].

I deny that.

Starlight of all colors shines between my outstretched hands.

The dreams of all magical girls existing in this world flow in.

Under the red sky, the desperate cries of girls who rejected the age of

nothingness are heard.

Under the mockery of gods, the wishes of ordinary people expecting tomorrow are heard.

-Hikari-chan!!

'Friendship shining yellow.'

-Hikari!!

'Love burning red.'

-Leader!!

'Trust advancing green.'

-Leader!!!

'Respect approaching orange.'

'Responsibility spreading lavender.'

I saw the original fates those girls should have had.

I saw their lives ruined by the gods.

Countless starlights.

Countless people.

Countless dreams.

"The first deception."

The gentle lie that there will be a better tomorrow than yesterday.

"The beginning of tomorrow."

The beginning of today advancing forward believing in tomorrow.

"Hope."

The light of the world grasped in my outstretched hands rises and begins to engulf me.

Flash—!!

Becoming one with the fragments of the true world, I shoot a huge pillar of light towards that red sky.

Animus caught by the unique skills pouring down in all colors.

The magical girl of [Conquest] who became a false goddess herself for a moment of realization.

I spoke the answer she desired.

"Right here, right now!!!"

"..."

A huge white pillar that engulfed me and Animus, wrapped around Shinjuku where the battle was taking place, and extended to that universe.

A huge tree that used the Earth as soil and extended its branches towards the stars.

Under the pillar that grew eating all dreams, I declare.

"I deny ＜Magical Girl HAZARD＞!!"

Under the huge tree formed by all starlight gathering, I gradually change.

"I deny the fate of the three goddesses!!"

Due to the white light enveloping my body, my hair grows endlessly and shines white, not silver.

"I deny the destruction of this world!!"

The magician's outfit disappearing due to the white light, what fills its place is a dazzling white dress.

"I am the magical girl of [Hope]!!"

Red eyes awakened not as the reincarnation of the goddess of [Beginning] who lost her two eyes, but as a magical girl who loves this world.

Behind me, starlight of all colors gathers to create a dazzlingly shining white veil.

Flash!!

The 4 starlights floating above my head connect into one, becoming a huge white halo.

Not colorless, but myriad colors encompassing all colors.

The white magical girl.

My new birth.

A true magical girl beyond [Beginning].

The final fate I determined myself.

Fully Bloomed 4-star Magical Girl of [Hope]

Our story is not a tragedy starting from war.

Our story will start with hope.

"I declare to you."

I gathered white starlight in both hands to create a huge star.

A huge white star that completely covers the red sky.

The morning star of hope.

A star protecting people living for tomorrow.

[Hope] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Flow of All Things

Everything that humans experience, love, hate, grieve, and wish for.

Karma.

Cause and effect.

All things of humanity are dyed in my white light.

All lands where humans live begin to shine due to my white star.

I, the final magical girl, will affirm humanity's tomorrow.

Because I saw your dreams shining more brilliantly than me who merely pioneered borrowing the power of gods.

I could dare to declare.

"Humans will live for tomorrow!"

"Haaaah!!!"

The magical girl of [Conquest] rushing as led by the two lions, shaking off all unique skills. Behind her, all memories of war gathered to create huge wings of glory.

She was approaching to deliver the strongest blow to me who had achieved realization.

She who was approaching giving her all had no doubt about her own defeat.

'Animus...!'

I delivered the final blow with respect to the apostle who alone tried to care for humanity in an era without me.

The white morning star.

A white giant star affirming everything humans create for tomorrow fell from my hands.

Light. Only light filled everything.

Bwooooo—

When the morning star fell, all the world surrounding us was dyed white in an instant.

Even the red sky, even the black demons.

Under the white flash, they were slowly crumbling and disappearing.

Everything destroyed by demons fallen from the gods' curses and the stars' wounds was being restored.

The end of the era where gods and stars frolicked.

A change to help humans prepare for tomorrow.

All worlds change.

"..."

"..."

After the huge morning star passed.

The Scramble Crossing appeared with all traces of battle completely gone.

Though it should have been completely shattered after the fierce battle, it had returned to its usual appearance.

The red sky had completely disappeared and returned to blue.

A quiet daily life.

Everything had returned to normal.

"You... won."

"Yes. I won."

"That's good."

"..."

Animus in Emily's form was slowly being swallowed by white energy and disappearing.

Though she was in a state where she couldn't stay in any place because she had shattered even the Glass Star constituting herself.

Animus was looking at the blue sky with a peaceful expression.

"Animus."

"...Hm?"

"Why did you try to give me realization while sacrificing yourself to the will of the stars?"

"Because hostile relationships were also a way of human interaction. And..."

The first trial.

The first apostle.

Because she was the strongest, she was more faithful to her duty as an apostle than anyone else.

Animus, who was born from human tragedy and thus more interested in humans than anyone else.

"Hehehe."

The girl who had devised her own method to save humanity paused her words and laughed.

That laugh somehow looked really like Emily.

Like a girl who couldn't understand humans including herself as humans, but still loved humans.

The smile of the apostle who alone tried to love humans in her own way was awkward but modest.

"...And magical girls are."

Because they exist to protect everyone.

For you who can protect everyone.

"For a better tomorrow than me."

"..."

"Ah. There is one thing I regret though."

"What is it?"

"A cheese sandwich. I wanted to... try it at least once."

"..."

With those words, Animus completely disappeared, leaving reddish-brown fragments. The fragments created from her body spread across the blue sky while emitting a soft light.

The girl who had the fate of [War] and [Conquest] disappeared in the blue sky.

"..."

Silence

On the Scramble Crossing where I stood alone, the warm early summer sunlight and white clouds were rising.

It was raining on the day I first came here, and it was chaotic on the day I came to see the red broadcast.

Peace felt for the first time at the Scramble Crossing.

I had overcome <Magical Girl HAZARD> for the first time.

Warmth

Early summer sunlight full of hope.

That sunlight caressing my cheeks was so dazzling that I stared blankly.

In my ears like that, some voices are heard.

"Hikari!!"

"Hikari-chan!!"

"Leader!!"

"We won!"

Girls running over.

[Announcement from Elysion Observatory!! The red atmosphere has completely disappeared!! We won!!]

-Waaaaaaaa!!!

Cheers bursting out of joy for overcoming the trial were heard from the radio and all over the city.

Hug

Yuki rushing into my arms.

Yuki trembled at the complete victory she experienced for the first time and hid her face in my arms.

"Hikari, we won."

"We did win."

"Hikari, you've changed."

"I have changed."

The world has now changed.

Not an era of destruction.

Because it has become an era of hope we create.

"Hikari-chan!!"

Hana squeezed in between us.

"Oh, Leader changed clothes? You look like a goddess."

Ichika laughed heartily while brushing back her long green hair.

"Hah... that was tough."

Kyoko looked over her tattered cheerleader outfit and dusted it off.

"We won."

"We did it!"

"Waaaaa!!"

Cheers of magical girls heard from afar.

"Thank you magical girls!!"

"We survived thanks to you!!"

"Thank youuu!!"

People walking out of shelters and expressing gratitude to us.

When I saw the red broadcast here a year ago.

Could I have imagined this sight?

"We won."

I said with a somehow refreshed feeling.

We now had [Hope].

Chapter 113 : Calm Sea

June 21

"So! I'm saying it's right to disperse the magical girls belonging to the Free Magical Girl Federation while carefully considering their nationalities!"

"What nonsense...! Do you know how much money the US has invested in recruiting magical girls?"

"That's America's situation! Isn't that right, everyone?"

"I agree with that statement. Magical girls should be according to their original nationality..."

"That sounds like Russia, China, and Korea, which have over a hundred affiliated magical girls, want to take a step back from all security responsibilities from now on?"

"Responsibilities? Responsibilities? Weren't you the ones who shouted every man for himself before the trials came? Now you're asking to distribute security responsibilities?"

"Well, although it's not the fault of the current Russian interim government, isn't Russia in a situation where they need to be somewhat cautious about security responsibilities?"

"Hmm... that's subtly arguing that the US is free from all responsibilities."

"No, you...!"

The conference room was burning hot with debates about the placement of magical girls from each country.

After confirming that conventional weapons were ineffective against

demons, the placement of magical girls was connected to critical security situations, so there was no room for concession.

'...I feel awkward.'

I was sitting nervously, holding coffee served by a UN staff member, wearing my white magical girl outfit.

White clothes

White halo

White hair

And even a white chair.

I was emitting a strange atmosphere like the only completely bleached thing inside the conference room.

'I'm not some decorative doll... this is embarrassing.'

Unlike the calm-colored chairs where foreign ministers representing each country were sitting, I alone was told to sit in a white chair made of marble. At first, I suspected it was part of a power play to shame me.

But that suspicion gradually disappeared due to the attitude of the dozens of staff who brought me here.

-If, if there's anything lacking, please be understanding...

-Could you tell me if there are any aspects I should pay attention to?

-Um... never mind. If the goddess would just be present...

-It's a bit burdensome to be called a goddess, couldn't you just call me a magical girl?

-I'm, I'm sorry. Goddess.

Unfortunately, because Animus had declared herself equal to a goddess, I who won the battle ended up bearing that responsibility.

'I have no intention of creating a pseudo-religion.'

Since there were movements trying to promote me as some kind of saint or angel after the first trial, I calmed things down by issuing statements to various religious circles that I was neither a divine being nor a saint or angel corresponding to their religion.

-Dorim, can you make me an official SNS account?

-Why that all of a sudden?

-Just to post what I eat every day.

-Unnie... you like that kind of thing.

I tried to break the atmosphere leading to idol worship by consistently appealing in various ways that I was an ordinary human who ate, slept, and went to the bathroom.

'I didn't expect it to turn into promotional activities...'

-Successor, the number of believers has increased a lot.

-How many?

-20,000.

-Hmm... that much should be manageable in Elysion, let's just feed them and send them back.

-20,000 per day.

-We're doomed.

Even people wanting to convert to the "Goddess Religion" that only believes in the golden girls from Elysion were appearing by the tens of thousands every day.

I created the most friendly atmosphere possible for them and instantly turned it into a tourism atmosphere.

'I managed to soothe them all, feed them, show them around the neighborhood, calm them down and send them back, but.'

How nice it would have been if I could have fried all the demons of the approaching trials, spanked the goddesses' bottoms, and returned magnificently.

The process of preparing for the battle was not easy, but the process of coaxing and soothing each country that had fully realized the true existence of the crisis of human extinction and the true value of magical girls was also difficult.

-Black lions keep appearing!

-I'll dispatch magical girls to that area through the Threads of Fate.

-Food prices are skyrocketing because logistics have stopped due to the demons!

-I can create as much as is lacking.

-That's... enough for 200,000 people to eat...

-When would you like me to make it?

-We'd be grateful if you could make it even now.

-I see.

-And people injured from attacks by black lions...

-I'll heal them all.

Because I could now use the unique skills of all magical girls, I could solve most problems on my own.

The number of magical girls was far from enough to protect all countries, and even mobilizing all the miracles of Elysion, their schedules were tight. So I had been going on business trips to areas where magical girls couldn't reach, quickly solving various problems.

The newly bloomed unique skill of [Hope] was very useful in that process.

Flow of All Things. The power to affirm and change or restore the

human world.

I could easily solve most problems wherever human history existed.

-Is there any other problem?

-No... there isn't.

There was another new discovery.

Another ability I gained when I bloomed as the magical girl of [Hope].

A different type of avatar from Animus's Divine Manifestation.

If there was a medium that could contain the divinity contained in the fourth star, I could create an avatar that could act autonomously. The problem was that in the process of creating the medium, a believer had to make it with affection...

'...Horse mask.'

Very timely, there was a believer who had tried to recreate me in detail since the debutante.

The horse mask I met while looking for a vessel to contain the avatar was surprisingly a woman with a calm impression.

When she first came, looking like a cool-headed OL.

I thought the shy horse mask had sent the company president instead.

-You're... a woman?

-...Yes.

-Why, why such... activities...

-Women like cute girls too.

-I... see.

After an awkward meeting, I succeeded in descending divinity into

10 new dolls that the horse mask made and sent.

10 dolls starting to move.

"Py-Pygmalion...!! I have surpassed you...!!"

Seeing 10 of me transform into magical girls, the horse mask cheered and jumped up and down.

The sight of her, who looked like a calm team leader in a suit, jumping around happily like a girl was cuter than I expected.

-You did very well.

-Thank you.

-I'll praise you.

-Whoa?! Wa-wait a minute!! Hehe...

-Hm?

As a joke, 10 of me surrounded her, linked arms or patted her head, but she suddenly fainted with a nosebleed, so I hurriedly stopped. I was surprised when there was a sincere reaction to the prank I did feeling like teasing an older sister who was older than me in my previous life.

'She had a calm impression, but she was more passionate than I thought.'

After pondering for a while about the treatment of the avatars, I decided to use them only in emergencies.

-Hmm... let's hold off on using them for now.

-Ah... what a shame.

If I used dolls imbued with my divinity to have countless mes performing miracles all over the world, it seemed like it would accelerate the atmosphere of trying to enshrine me as a goddess, so I decided to stop.

'No... to be exact...'

Because it seemed like humanity in this world would become dependent to the point of not being able to live without me.

Because it seemed like it would change into a society relying on someone transcendent like in the age of goddesses.

I decided not to intervene in this world anymore, except for damage caused by goddesses and trials.

Fighting against demons and helping people was a problem only for the magical girls of this world to solve.

If all problems were solved, I would become an unparalleled threat and foreign substance to this world.

I had to gradually complete my preparations.

"..."

Separating this world from the goddesses and the will of the stars and returning it to the people. And creating an environment where they can live well without me.

It was my task while dismantling the remaining trials. Thinking about those things made my chest tighten with a sense of responsibility rising up.

A sigh let out due to the tightness.

"Whew..."

"..."

"..."

"Huh?"

The conference room suddenly fell silent.

I looked forward in surprise and saw everyone looking at me with startled expressions, reacting to my sigh.

Blink blink

The scene of ministers who were about to grab each other's collars just a moment ago now looking around nervously with rabbit eyes somehow made me feel sorry for them.

I understand that the people who should lead this world are being cautious in front of trials.

'But it's troublesome if they react so sensitively to my every move.'

Isn't this happening because they put me in such a conspicuous chair in the first place?

I thought I should ask to replace it with a calm-colored chair next time.

"Ah, it's nothing. Please continue the meeting."

Chapter 114 : Calm Sea

When opening the window in the quiet room, hot early summer wind blows in along with dust.

The last fragrance emitted by flowers beginning to wither without anyone tending the garden.

"..."

Creak

As Sumire tries to open the window further, a sound comes from her joints.

The sound coming from her limbs replaced with silver prosthetic arms and legs was unfamiliar.

Originally, these were wounds that could be completely healed in the process of blooming, but because those wounds left by her sister allowed her to become a true guardian, she refused restoration herself.

"It's quiet."

The main house she returned to after a long time since the funeral was desolate.

She never imagined she would see such a quiet scene of the main house in her lifetime.

People who used to come and go so frequently that the threshold was worn down

People belonging to Fujimoto Security.

Ninjas belonging to the Nameless Unit.

They no longer existed because they were either killed by Anna or had left for other places.

The invincible family that had controlled all of Japan for hundreds of years and finally had no one above them except for a single person.

Power that could make tens of millions bow their heads with just a word.

The end of that power was just the scent of flowers and silence coming from the slightly withered garden.

A voice calling Sumire as she looked out the window for a moment.

"Sumire."

"Grandfather."

"Were you resting? Did I disturb you?"

"Not at all."

Sumire tried to support the old man struggling to enter the room with her silver prosthetic hand, but he refused.

"It's fine. You're in no state yourself."

"..."

"That foolish man... because of his own karma and greed, our precious granddaughter has become completely covered in wounds."

"..."

Sumire, who had defended her uncle and been driven out by her father, settled everything with her grandfather who had nominally been the chairman of the Fujimoto Group.

Her grandfather, who had even his family name taken away by her father and was confined to the hospital with just his name on it.

Now only Sumire and her grandfather remained with the right to dismantle Fujimoto.

"...Now it's all over."

"Yes."

Because her father had strictly separated the shares that collateral and direct lines could have in order to create an absolute dictatorship system.

Because he had thoroughly hidden the structure of connected businesses like a maze so that no one but himself could hold everything.

The process of completely dismantling the Fujimoto Group, which had already shattered with the ruler gone, was not difficult. Even if there was someone with dreams of founding a new empire by gathering small pieces from it, it would take a very long time.

"..."

"..."

Sumire and the Fujimoto chairman were quietly sitting in chairs, facing the incoming wind.

Early summer breeze tickled their noses.

The faint scent of withered wisteria flowers mixed in.

A nostalgic fragrance.

The Fujimoto chairman shed a tear as he smelled the fragrance carried by the wind.

In this fragrance, he was born, married, had sons, and was abandoned.

Wrinkles engraved with guilt and powerlessness for not being able to stop the fight between his two sons. Tears flowed over them, gathering like ditches and seeping in.

The regret, resentment, remorse, self-blame of a father abandoned in old age...

"Foolish man. Power scatters so meaninglessly."

"..."

"It is the way of things for flowers to completely wither after spring passes. Why couldn't he let go of that?"

"..."

No flower blooms for ten days.

It was the end of Fujimoto, which seemed like it would shine brilliantly forever in Japanese history.

Sumire reminisced about the scent of wisteria flowers in the house where she was born and raised, together with her grandfather until the moment the evening sun set.

When attendants caring for her grandfather appeared to take him home.

After greeting her grandfather, Sumire slowly walked out of the house.

Because she now intended to return this mansion to society, it would be the last time she walked proudly as the heir of Fujimoto. She probably wouldn't visit this place again until she died.

Swish

The corner of the garden.

The wall where wisteria flowers used to bloom profusely.

Sumire stroked the wall where all the flowers had fallen and only leaves remained, recalling memories.

Mother, grandmother, the gardener uncle, the servants.

Familiar faces who used to talk to her when she walked elegantly alone in the garden.

Faces she had sent away one by one.

-Young miss! Please try this!

-Young miss! Are you satisfied with the state of the garden today?

-Sumire, come here.

-Child, let's eat some snacks together with grandma.

Thud

The sound of brushing against bushes disappeared and a hard metal sound was heard.

What Sumire encountered at the end after walking forward with her hand on the wall for a long time was the main gate.

The 18 years of memories that were both long and short had ended.

Now it was time to leave.

She had to go to where the salon members and Kaede, who had now become close enough to call friends without embarrassment, were waiting.

There were still things to do as a magical girl, as the chairman of the Council, as the boss of the salon, as a guardian.

Sumire, the young lady of the Fujimoto family who used to walk in the garden holding hands with her sister, now remains in this house forever.

What is leaving is the guardian Sumire who protects people among people.

-Hehehe!

-Hehe!

Thinking she saw two girls holding hands passing through the garden, Sumire turned around in surprise.

"...Anna?"

But there was no one there anymore.

Only the huge mansion seeping into the sunset looked eerie, with all lights completely out.

The wisteria garden that used to sway like lavender waves on a spring day had disappeared like mist somewhere.

"..."

Sumire looked forward again and turned her back on the mansion where the scent of wisteria flowers used to be.

She walked into the brilliantly lit downtown.

She advanced towards the place where countless people walk, live, cry and laugh.

The place where friends are waiting.

The place where magical girls are waiting.

The place where people live.

"Goodbye, everyone."

And so Fujimoto disappeared into history.

* * *

Flash

Once again, her eyes snap open without fail.

Chirp chirp

Cock-a-doodle-doo

Bird sounds heard suspiciously often.

Mountain breeze seeping into her nostrils.

Dry and stuffy barracks air.

Sleeptalking of platoon members grinding their teeth or muttering something.

"..."

Hong Nayeon, platoon leader of White Wing Company Headquarters Platoon, magical girl of [Sea].

She checked the watch on her left wrist while still half asleep.

5 minutes before the wake-up bugle.

"Ah, please."

After being thoroughly trained at the training center, her eyes always open before the damn wake-up bugle even sounds.

That's because the training of Lee Minseul, the 1st Platoon leader and magical girl of [Shooting] who was assigned as her training supervisor and instructor, always involved unexpected situations.

Some days she would set off flash bangs 2 hours after lights out and order them to be in full gear within 5 minutes.

Some days she would make them do guerrilla training in the mountains right after shooting practice without returning to the base.

'I still shudder thinking about that time.'

When Lee Minseul, who had been grilling her like popping beans for two months, smiled like an angel and told her to speak informally now, pinning the rank insignia on her chest, she cried tears of joy but thinking about it now, it was vexing.

-Sniff, Min...Minseul, thank you...

-No need for thanks.

Minseul whispered while embracing her.

"The real military life starts now."

Nayeon didn't know the true meaning of those words at the time.

Because right after that, the day of trials came and she received orders to defend Busan with the headquarters platoon members.

'Se-Second Lieutenant Hong Nayeon! I will defend it without fail!'

It was simple to clear out the black lions rushing towards the beach in Busan, which the magical girl of [Cyberbrain] had already covered with silver cannons and soldiers.

In the first place, her ability showed excellent compatibility in toying with enemies on the beach.

The problem was the days full of duties after the day of trials.

Intense work traveling all over South Korea, and time that doesn't pass.

It was truly dreadful.

Bam—Bam—BamBamBam——BamBaraBamBam

"Uuugh..."

"D-Damn."

"Save me."

The headquarters platoon members, except for the magical girl of [Meal Service] who had already gone to the mess hall long ago, got up staggering.

One of the platoon members mechanically closing the curtains and arranging bedding muttered while looking at the situation board.

"Huh? Platoon leader."

"What."

Although Hong Nayeon was the youngest in the headquarters platoon, Park Saebyeok said it would be a waste to put a born 2-star magical girl as a regular platoon member, so she appointed her as the platoon leader of the headquarters platoon which didn't have one.

And the headquarters platoon members respected Hong Nayeon who had parachuted in, in their own way.

"The company commander is calling."

"Hm?"

There was a message urgently calling Nayeon on the monitor showing the real-time situation of White Wing Unit members.

"What is it? We've completely cleaned up Busan now."

"Don't know."

Nayeon scratched her butt while arranging bedding and passing by company members moving for morning roll call, staggering into the company commander's office.

Knock knock

"Second Lieutenant Hong Nayeon, I have business at the company commander's office..."

"Ah, it's urgent, so please change and prepare to go out right away."

"I must have misheard?"

Nayeon was flustered because Park Saebyeok usually acted according to FM unless it was an extremely urgent matter.

"I heard that the Walpurgis meeting designated Lieutenant Hong as a key combatant for the next trial. This is something I just received urgently too, so we'll have to go together to hear the detailed situation."

"T-trial, you say?"

"They say the next trial is in the seas of Europe."

Nayeon's vision went black.

Chapter 115 : Calm Sea

In fact, the current global situation was chaotic, with only a lid placed on the crisis of human extinction.

First, Japan was paralyzed by Animus's invasion of Tokyo, and with the complete dismantling of the Fujimoto Group, all businesses and market orders were in turmoil.

In such a situation, many magical girls in Japan were either keeping their places in the chaotic Japan, or running around until their mouths stank, receiving requests to exterminate demons while crossing the Threads of Fate and warps.

Fully bloomed 3-star magical girls like Ichika, Hana, and Himari were especially being deployed to defend more areas, so now the only fully bloomed 3-star protecting Japan was Sumire, the magical girl of [Protection].

'Since Yuki is the only one who knows the full content of the trials, we must keep putting her on the response team from now on...'

China was still continuing political attacks regarding the [Sword] magical girl incident, unable to make an official announcement even in the face of the good news of the revival of state-affiliated magical girls.

Thanks to this, the party's propaganda officers and combat magical girls who were staying in Shanghai before they died were hiding due to external attention. They too had to live an unintended nomadic life as they couldn't do anything other than immediately defeating demons.

"Meilin, how long do the magical girls from Shanghai have to live like that?"

"We-well... I don't know much about political things either."

"If we announce that it's the power of highly advanced science rather than a divine miracle, will they be able to return home…"

"If [Hope] says so, I think it might get worse…"

The only thing I could do for them right away was to open Elysion so they could rest comfortably.

And Russia, which was relaxing for the time being because Alisa, the magical girl of [Death], was staying in Moscow.

Russia should have had an impeachment vote for the president at the beginning of this year, holding him responsible for the nuclear incident.

But judging that it was impossible to replace all government personnel in a situation where an unprecedented crisis called trials was right in front of them, they had been maintaining the ridiculous title of Russian Interim Government since the beginning of this year.

The period was until the day they overcome human extinction.

'To be honest, it's like telling the Defense Minister to take responsibility for the extinction crisis while already being blamed for the nuclear war.'

The only place where magical girls could be pulled out with peace of mind in the most stable state in the current situation was Korea, which was not a direct hit point of the trials and where a fully bloomed 3-star magical girl had established a strong base.

In addition, the stage for the next trial is the seas of Europe.

The only one who can be 100% active there is not a fully bloomed 3-star magical girl, but a single born 2-star magical girl.

"That's why we called for Nayeon's help."

"I must have misheard?"

"Pfft. Smells of experience."

"..."

"You use 'danakka' outside too? You've completely become a soldier."

Nayeon's mouth slowly protruded and her face turned red upon hearing my words.

'Oops.'

I ended up teasing her because it was funny to see the girl with an impressive free atmosphere, punk-style clothing, and sharp eyes and snarky speech using soldier-like speech in military uniform like a private.

Park Saebyeok, who was listening to the conversation beside us, also chuckled, seeming to find Hong Nayeon's situation funny from the side as well.

'That's why you should have come when called earlier.'

Even now, I wanted to pinch Nayeon's protruding mouth like a duck bill with tweezers and teabag her saying, "See, wouldn't it have been comfortable and good if you had come when Kang Eunbit from the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Headquarters called?"

But I decided to ignore it with a broad mind.

"Ahem. Anyway, even if we borrow airships, there aren't many people as excellent as Nayeon when it comes to battles at sea."

"So I'm going to Europe?"

"Yes, of course you won't be in charge alone, many magical girls including myself will be going together."

"If I leave my post, Busan..."

"Hmm. Come to think of it, it's unreasonable to leave a talent capable of naval battles in Busan, which has already been fortified."

"Company Commander...?!"

"I'll tell Kang Dorim to strengthen Busan's posture further. It would be good for Lieutenant Hong to go."

"Of course, Elysion will also dispatch magical girls to fill Nayeon's vacancy."

"Ugh..."

Nayeon looked depressed at the atmosphere where her overseas dispatch duty was almost confirmed.

Park Saebyeok nodded and patted Nayeon's shoulder.

"Gain a lot of experience as it's your first overseas dispatch duty."

"...Understood."

"..."

Actually, if the second trial is facing a giant poisonous snake in the sea as in the original work, there's no need to call Hong Nayeon, the magical girl of [Sea].

'I could just go wrapped in unique skills specialized in destructive power and beat it up.'

But there were two concerning factors after the trials began.

The first is [Plague] who hasn't declared her domain and can't be found anywhere.

I went to Antarctica with Yuki where she had declared her domain in the original work, but couldn't find her anywhere, and couldn't find her power in any region.

-[Plague] always just lay here talking to herself...

The second is the possibility that the content of the trial could be completely changed like with Animus.

If the power of a 4-star magical girl is equal to a goddess as Animus

said, the place and time of the trial definitely can't be changed. The trials are just like a purification process that the will of the stars spits out until it calls forth the dragon of destruction, the sixth and final trial.

In fact, the first trial occurred in Japan as it was, and Animus bloomed into 4-star by receiving the energy of lion demons.

'The goddesses' authority can only interfere by putting curses on it.'

The curse poured on me in the first trial was neutralized by the nature that the goddess of [Beginning] had. But next time, instead of wasting curses on me, they will put different kinds of interference.

"If the content of the trial is a little different from what I know, Nayeon will need to help the magical girls protect people."

"...Such an important mission for me."

"Please."

"..."

A magical girl who just protected her surroundings to keep her parents' place to return until the moment of destruction in the original work.

A magical girl pioneering a new fate along with her parents' unexpected return discovered in Elysion.

"I understand."

"Thank you."

Hong Nayeon, the magical girl of [Sea], participated in the second trial.

It would be nice if all my worries were misplaced and we could just beat up a big snake in the sea together.

'That's not likely to happen.'

The three goddesses will definitely play some trick.

They may not forcefully descend from the throne of nothingness right now to get beaten and expelled by me, but may be waiting for the moment when the dragon of destruction, the greatest trial, weakens humanity as much as possible. Gradually sprinkling curses that can slightly weaken humanity through various trials.

We will have to fight together with European magical girls while considering the worst-case scenario.

'Laura...'

I need to help the girl with so much affection that she even knelt before me in gratitude when her friends returned alive, to overcome the crisis that has befallen Europe.

"Come to think of it."

Park Saebyeok began to speak in a lull in the conversation.

"It's amazing how much stronger and more active magical girls have become compared to before, since the moment demons appeared."

"That's because magical girls were born to bloom with dreams and protect people from demons from the beginning."

The most dependent on magical girls.

The most active magical girls.

Ironically, in humanity's greatest crisis, the admiration and dreams received by girls with the power of starlight were incomparable to before.

To the extent that there were more girls who awakened through demon extermination over the past few weeks than girls who rose from 1-star to 2-star through friendly matches or actively helping many people over several months.

'It's true that starlight shines best when it's darkest.'

Park Saebyeok looked at me as if newly amazed.

"You prepared all this since last summer?"

"I never imagined it would become this grand."

"Do you know that even when the media openly calls the magical girl of [Hope] a goddess, no correction requests come in?"

My head throbbed when I heard that.

"...I'll make a correction request."

"There's no need for that."

Park Saebyeok looked at me fondly with quietly burning pink eyes as always.

"If it's [Hope] who fought together to protect Seoul from [Bombing], I can gladly call her a goddess."

"...I just did what was natural."

"It's because you say things like that that you're treated like a goddess."

Park Saebyeok giggled, and I smiled awkwardly.

And Nayeon stealthily retreated with a bored expression at the company commander's words of encouragement that had suddenly begun.

Chapter 116 : Calm Sea

July 1

"Cyberbrain World."

Flash—!

At my gesture, white starlights rose over the English Channel, creating a huge platform.

Adding the imagination that Kang Dorim used when creating silver ships to the white platform large enough for thousands of people to stand on. Instantly, a makeshift mobile fortress is completed.

Solid white platform

Self-propelled guns that can aim in all directions

Propulsion device that can float the platform in the air

I didn't have as good design sense as Dorim to refine it into an elegant form, so it became a somewhat crude makeshift fortress, but it would be enough to use once and discard.

'What I'm better at than Dorim is...'

Infinite starlight.

Unlike Dorim, who takes about a week to create one silver ship, I could create them at 5-minute intervals if I gave up on the details of the work.

Flash—

Flash—

I installed similar-sized mobile fortresses all over the English Channel.

So that magical girls who can't fly for long periods can rest or escape.

So that silver ships can make emergency landings during the second trial.

To efficiently carry out the task of installing mobile fortresses everywhere, I had to do it with the help of avatars.

"Divine Manifestation. Galatea, descend."

Pop!

Pop!

Pop!

10 doll avatars arrived one after another on the makeshift mobile fortress using the power of [Transfer].

With 10 magical girls gathered with white halos where 4 stars are connected into one, it felt like my skin was tingling.

For now, I had to disperse them before the others arrived.

"...Please help."

"Okay. Let's work hard."

"This really feels strange."

"Then shall we talk about military life?"

"You'll get hit if you talk about Park Sergeant. Really."

"Pfft."

Galatea.

The statue and lover created by Pygmalion.

It was a name I gave inspired by the horse mask calling herself 'Pygmalion'.

Her, whom I thought was an irresponsible otaku who devoted her not insignificant life to doll making.

I grew somewhat fond of her after hearing her human inner thoughts while staying with Misaki.

-I broke up with my long-time boyfriend and fled to America to work for a model company, but the company completely went bankrupt due to the economic crisis.

-Oh no.

-So I returned to my hometown and was holed up at home for a few years, then got completely absorbed after seeing [Beginning]'s broadcast. Thinking this might be true passion...

-I see.

Before leaving Elysion after fixing 10 dolls, her life story revealed with an embarrassed expression had its own circumstances. The doll making she started to save herself caused trouble for many people, but she said her life had at least improved compared to the past.

Out of respect for Pygmalion who was saved by me, I gave the avatars the name 'Galatea'.

"Then I'll get going."

"Okay."

Natural expression.

An atmosphere of understanding my flustered feelings.

'Talking to 'me' was a bit creepy at first.

Same appearance, same voice, same memories and personality.

But after blooming as a 4-star magical girl, my soul size and

consciousness expanded, so it often felt like people's prayers, memories, and emotions were coming in and being absorbed into my self to the point where even I got confused, so they weren't bad for dispersing the amount of information.

'Certainly, if the avatars from the [Deception] era felt like semi-automatic dolls that I had to occasionally enter and control, Galatea really feels like she moves automatically.'

If the gods summoned by Animus were subordinates with different abilities from herself, my Galateas were minor copies with the same abilities as me, just a little inferior.

However, since I, the summoning subject, was close to omnipotent with the Flow of All Things, the synergy was doubled.

At some point when the work had progressed to some extent, I contacted the observatory.

"This is the magical girl of [Hope] reporting, mobile fortress installation complete."

-Elysion Observatory received.

"Is there anywhere I missed installing?"

-You have accurately placed them at 10-kilometer intervals.

"Yes, please continue to check."

-Understood.

I completed the installation of mobile fortresses all over the straits passing through Britain, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands.

'It looks quite cool.'

Dazzling pure white aerial fortresses located all over the huge strait.

A sight that might make environmental protection groups or navies of each country faint.

Of course, I asked for permission and understanding from the leaders of each country, and planned to remove them immediately after the trial ended.

Pop!

"Hikari! I'm here!"

"Yuki."

I had become dull to the sense of time from traveling around the world so much, but it was probably after school.

Hug

Yuki jumping out of the warp gate I temporarily installed on the aerial fortress, running pitter-patter and hugging me.

'She just hugs without even asking about the fortress.'

I've accepted it a few times without saying anything because of the atmosphere, but it was funny how she was starting to hug as if it was a natural greeting.

Grabbing my hand even while eating, suddenly contacting me in the middle of the night asking what I'm doing.

'Were girls this age originally so fond of skinship?'

Even Hana, who really had no friends until recently, didn't seem to depend on me this much.

"Oh right."

"Hm?"

Thinking of Hana who recently bloomed, there was something that bothered me.

Though it wasn't noticeable because her own combat ability was excellent, Yuki hadn't been able to grasp the thread of blooming despite her steadily built reputation since the friendly matches.

Barely after the first trial passed, Dorim, Ichika, Hana, Sumire, and Himari bloomed, and magical girls who were born 2-star were gradually grasping the clues to blooming.

I couldn't understand why Yuki, who had already bloomed once, couldn't grasp the clue to blooming.

"Yuki, still no clue about blooming?"

"Ah... yeah. [Resurrection] still doesn't work. Hehe..."

"Hmm. So that was indeed the goddess of [Beginning]'s intervention."

"Yeah... sorry."

"No! Yuki, you're so helpful!"

Even after breaking down her mental walls and approaching Chen Lihua, Natalia, and Yeonseo, her self-esteem that was shattered in the previous world didn't recover easily. Especially this time, my words and actions asking as if interrogating weren't good.

'It's not like Yuki is only needed for combat ability.'

It was heartbreaking to see my hero looking so small like this.

"..."

While comforting Yuki, I raised the divinity that looks at the fate of the stars.

Red

Burning love

'It's clearly strongly connected to flame, but I can't guess at all.'

Though it's a hint spanning not just some emotion but a strong goal piercing through life.

Such a vague keyword.

Come to think of it, I couldn't guess what Hana's 'shining friendship'

and Ichika's 'advancing trust', who had already bloomed, had to do with [Swiftness] and [Freedom].

'The gentle lie and beginning of tomorrow of [Hope] are equally vague words.'

I wouldn't have realized it either if there hadn't been the final battle with Animus.

The key to blooming.

This word selection that seemed like the goddess of [Beginning]'s taste made me troubled.

Since the day I first shot the white arrow, there were no more appearances of remnants of the goddess of [Beginning].

"Ah, come to think of it."

"Hm?"

"The apostle of [Plague] still hasn't been seen, right?"

"Yeah."

"Maybe... she'll appear during the trial?"

"I've been thinking about that."

Black scales absorbing starlight, Greed.

White scales emitting starlight, Plague.

[Plague] who suddenly appeared in the fifth trial where new types of demons were rampant all over the world, muttering incomprehensible words while dealing with birds.

[Interfere with our world... pass without... I'm against it!... It's none of our concern... If it's going to be like this, rather... Argh!... This is tyranny!]

A madwoman with nothing but black bandages wrapped around her entire body. We had to keep in mind the possibility that she might appear after receiving the curse of the three goddesses.

"The problem is we have no idea what that one's purpose is."

"Because we couldn't communicate at all."

Animus sifting and testing humanity.

'Alisa' who was only interested in Alisa's death.

The Divine Maiden who was only interested in the goddess of [Beginning]'s orders.

The purposes of the three apostles were completely revealed, but as for the last apostle [Plague], her purpose was unknown because she behaved inconsistently and showed madness.

"The other Alisa said it would be useless to meet that one before her descent."

"Yeah... Who would have thought [Death] would sacrifice herself in the dream world."

The fact that the apostle of [Death] I brought and the apostle of [Death] Yuki met were different personalities seems to have been quite shocking.

A situation completely different from the original work now, just preparing to match the time and place of the trials.

"..."

"..."

A situation that has changed so much.

An uncertain future.

Only helplessness was felt.

"...Shall we go down for now?"

"Okay."

We were just doing our best to prepare.

* * *

[The human body is like a delicate world.]

[Even if one cell is slightly off, it gradually collapses beyond help.]

[Moreover, if countless personalities are imbued in each cell of that delicate world.]

[If billions of souls have to type one key each to write the novel called life.]

[Isn't that the worst plague?]

[The goddess promised.]

[That she could bring 'us' into this world.]

Chapter 117 : Raging Rapids

July 6

[Announcement from Elysion Observatory! The omen of red sky has been confirmed!]

[Threads of Fate protocol activated... stabilization confirmed. Assigned operators, please check warp gate status.]

[Each warp gate status stabilization confirmed. All points currently normal.]

[Confirmed. Each ship please standby at designated positions.]

-Sirius, standing by!

-Vega, standing by.

-Pollux, standing by.

[Deployment confirmed. We will inform all combatants deployed at each location about real-time changes in Threads of Fate activation! First...]

"..."

Incessant radio chatter in my ears.

Sea breeze blowing under the hot summer sun.

Sound of raging waves.

Swoosh

Swoosh

Unlike the first trial in Tokyo, there was no tension that felt like it would explode at any moment.

Because magical girls had gained experience exterminating demons while traveling around the world for the past month, and their confidence had increased as much as the perfect first victory. All civilians had been evacuated and they were just calmly waiting for the approaching battle.

-Elysion Observatory, refugee evacuation confirmed.

-We received contact from governments of each country where signs of small-scale rifts were confirmed that evacuation orders have been completely carried out from coastal areas and rift occurrence points.

I had issued evacuation orders to citizens in areas adjacent to the English Channel and Dover Strait two weeks ago.

[We received radio confirmation that evacuation is complete from the governments of Britain, France, and Netherlands.]

"Magical girl of [Hope], confirmed."

Unlike the first Tokyo evacuation order that was barely achieved by mobilizing all means of threats and persuasion as the leader of magical girls, the evacuation order for European coasts, who already knew about the existence of trials and their general flow, was carried out smoothly.

After confirming that the designated ships and combat teams had boarded the dozens of white makeshift fortresses floating on the English Channel, I came down from the sky and approached the response team waiting on the shore.

Three magical girls standing in full combat readiness on the beach.

"Is everyone ready?"

"Yeah! Hikari! We can go anytime!"

"Yes! Of course!"

"N-no problem."

Hong Nayeon, the magical girl of [Sea] with a pale face, had ribbons engraved with fish scale patterns fluttering over her blue magical girl outfit reminiscent of a sea fairy.

Awakened 2-star magical girl of [Flame] Yuki.

Born 2-star magical girl of [Lightning] Chen Lihua.

Born 2-star magical girl of [Sea] Hong Nayeon.

I formed a combination that could project as much firepower as possible to deal with the huge sea serpent floating on the water.

'Looking at it like this, it's quite a formidable combination.'

A combination superior to born 3-star magical girls except for me and Animus in naval battles and instantaneous firepower.

These three had been coordinating for a few days before the day of the trial, confirming synergies of each other's abilities such as exploding water, controlling sea temperature, or increasing destructive power.

And now, with the second trial just around the corner.

Nayeon was breathing heavily non-stop while sweating. Seeing Nayeon like that, Chen Lihua tilted her head instead.

"Hoo... hoo..."

"Hm? You're still that nervous?"

"Isn't it stranger not to be nervous...?"

"We just have to do what we have to do as magical girls."

"It's not such a simple matter..."

"It's simple, isn't it? The enemy is evil! We are justice! We just have to defeat them!"

Yap yap

At Chen Lihua's carefree answer while throwing punches, Nayeon gestured to stop talking anymore.

"..."

I was a bit surprised at Nayeon's nervous appearance.

Judging from the brief description in the original work as the guardian of Busan and her confident appearance before blooming, I had guessed she had a bold personality.

'She was so confident in Busan. Is she the type that becomes weak when not in a familiar place?'

Even though she was fighting in the sea, which was most advantageous to her among the three born 2-star magical girls gathered here, Nayeon's tension wasn't easing. As we were standing like that for a while, an urgent radio call came in.

[5 minutes until the trial time!]

I had to respond to all situations from the sky right before the battle broke out.

"Then I'll be watching from above."

"Okay! Good luck!"

"Let's all do our best to defeat the trial demon together!"

"Ugh... I feel like I'm going to throw up from nervousness."

Nayeon finally used magic to draw seawater and create a small ditch, lying face down in it.

"..."

Nayeon returned with a relieved face after emptying her stomach a bit in the ditch.

"...Please take care of Nayeon."

"Yeah. Good luck to you too, Hikari."

Lihua and Yuki desperately need Nayeon's power to fight properly at sea. I entrusted Nayeon's care to Yuki, who was the most accustomed to fighting among the three. After exchanging words of encouragement with the response team again, I went up to the sky to watch over the whole situation.

Hundreds of magical girls standing on dozens of white platforms.

Radio communications from magical girls waiting in areas where rift reactions are occurring around the world.

Silver ships floating in the sky watching the situation.

One divine doll Galatea deployed on each ship.

Preparations were complete.

[Trial time imminent! Starting countdown!]

[59... 58... 57...!]

Swoosh

Swoosh

The sound of relentless, violent waves.

Only the sound of waves echoed indifferently over the summer sea where all ships and people had been evacuated.

[3... 2... 1!]

The time of trial had come.

Guuung—

The sky instantly turned red.

Black airflow gradually gathered.

Not a warm color like the evening glow, but an eerie color as if blood

was flowing out.

The gathering black airflow made a chilling sound and spread like roots over the sky that had turned red.

Swish—

A large rift slowly opened.

A snake falls from the hole filled with chaos and darkness.

The writhing black body twisted its entire body as it came out of the hole. From the wide sea, it looked like just a snake falling, but the sound it made after falling onto the water surface was as loud as its huge body.

Baaaaaaang—

The black snake that fell with an explosive roar slowly raised its head in the water.

"..."

The snake, with a body above the water surface so huge it was like seeing a surreal giant waterspout, glared at us with shining red eyes.

No.

More precisely, it was looking at me.

-Observation team Zone 1. Confirmed appearance of giant demon.

-Observation team Zone 2. Confirmed appearance of giant demon!

-Observation team Zone 3 also confirmed.

Reports from observation teams on aerial fortresses installed every 10km continued one after another, and finally all observation teams up to the platform at the very back reported simultaneously.

A size so huge it could be seen tens of kilometers away.

A black lighthouse hundreds of meters tall grown on the English

Channel where waves endlessly surge.

[Announcement from Elysion Observatory! The estimated size of the enemy is about 1... 1km!]

I contacted Yuki while facing the giant sea serpent.

"Yuki. How does the situation look?"

[It's exactly the same as the memories from other trials.]

"What about the enemy's level?"

[I'm not sure exactly... but except for the dragon of destruction, there's not much difference in atmosphere from demons in other trials.]

"..."

The trials in the original work.

Although the trial Yuki participated in was from the third one with the boar, she was supposed to let me know if there were any differences compared to the process of the original trials starting, not the ones changed by Animus.

'No changes...?'

If that's true, I just need to join the response team to carry out the sea serpent subjugation operation, and issue small demon alerts to each region. But Yuki and I simultaneously felt a strong sense of dissonance and fell silent.

Other magical girls seemed to start feeling that dissonance too, as they began to murmur.

"Wait, why aren't the small demons appearing?"

"Y-yeah? Why?"

[...Unnie, nothing's happening in Korea. Are the rifts really open now?]

[Leader! This is China but only the sky turned red and nothing's happening.]

[Hikari-chan! Nothing's happening at the Middle East rift! What should we do?]

[The relief team reports to the magical girl of Hope. Currently no changes are occurring at the African rift.]

[The Council reports. Currently nothing is happening at the Japanese rift.]

As radio reports kept coming in from 3-star magical girls deployed as leaders at each rift occurrence site, strong suspicion was growing.

'...There are no small demons.'

I contacted Alisa and the Divine Maiden deployed in Russia and the US.

"Alisa, how's Russia?"

[Nothing's happening.]

"Divine Maiden, how's the US?"

[...Nothing's happening. This is clearly an anomaly.]

"Observatory. Please report if there's any unusual situation!"

The more the sea serpent silently stared at me.

The longer this silence continued.

The deeper my anxiety grew.

[N-no unusual situations. The red atmosphere is still there but nothing has happened.]

"..."

[Ah!! U-unusual situation occurring!]

"Where did it occur?!"

[At the scene where the trial demon appeared! Hundreds of small flying objects presumed to be magical girls are rapidly approaching from tens of kilometers outside the scene!!]

"What about other places?!"

[Currently not detected except at the scene!]

Intense starlights gradually felt approaching.

But I never deployed magical girls there.

A sense of dissonance felt simultaneously.

"Kugh!"

I quickly rose much higher than the platform of the aerial fortress.

Swoosh—!

"Divine Manifestation! Galatea!"

Pop

Pop

Pop

The Galateas arriving one after another all spread out with serious faces without a word to protect the white aerial fortresses they were each assigned to.

'We' didn't need to exchange opinions separately to carry out something.

At the same time, the black sea serpent opened its huge mouth that seemed like it could swallow even the sun and howled towards the sky.

■■■■■■■—!!!

Waves vibrate and whirlpools surge greatly under the ominous red sky.

I now realized the clearly felt sense of dissonance.

'Starlight is being rapidly sucked somewhere!'

Although it was meaningless to me since the infinite starlight I possessed was immediately recharged, it would be a hindrance to other magical girls here.

[Reports keep coming in from each combat team at the scene that starlight is being rapidly consumed!!]

"Hahaha!! Freedom!! Freedom!!"

"So this is the real world!!"

"It's our world!!"

"It's the world the goddess promised!!"

Born 3-star magical girl of [Plague]

Hundreds of 'them' with joyful expressions appeared from beyond the sky, with only black bandages wrapped around their bodies.

The curse of birth.

[O apostles of Plague, your endlessly dividing souls will now be reborn not in human bodies, but in the bodies of demons.]

Chapter 118 : Raging Rapids (2)

Hundreds of magical girls of [Plague] approaching from beyond with mad mutterings.

"It's birth!!"

"We can create our world!!"

"Now 'we' are the masters of this star!!"

As soon as I saw the magical girls of [Plague] absorbing starlight with scales hung on their backs, I immediately gathered both hands to create a white giant star.

'It's certain, they're trying to absorb and release the starlight gathered here! The magical girls of [Plague] are enemies!'

Numerous twinkling starlights appear above my hands, and the colorful light gradually overlaps and gathers into one. What is created is a brilliant white that includes all colors.

The pure light of hope gathers to become a white morning star that protects humans.

Flash—!

When I threw the created white morning star at the magical girls of [Plague], 10 magical girls of [Plague] clustered in the center of the group instantly disappeared with a huge flash.

"Everyone scatter!"

"You'll die if caught in the white star!"

"We have to scatter!!"

"The white star is dangerous!!"

"We'll die right after being born!!"

Hundreds of [Plague] scattering while quickly wrapping themselves in black starlight.

Their communication was done only through words. Also, their movements wrapped in black starlight were somewhat clumsy and improvised.

'They're not avatars or incarnations like Galatea. They're just separate independent individuals.'

Division of the apostle.

Hostility of the apostle.

For the first time, an apostle born from the goddess of [Beginning] completely opposes humanity.

Watching the gradually scattering magical girls of [Plague], I realized what I had to block in this battle. I had to leave the black sea serpent slowly starting to move in the distant sea to Yuki's group.

■■■■—!!!

Every time the giant sea serpent writhed, waves several kilometers high rose, and hundreds of huge whirlpools formed with the sound of its body vibrating.

Heavy noise. Huge waves.

Due to the violent waves and raging whirlpools caused by the black body that seemed like it would split the strait, it looked like thousands of mountain ranges made of water had formed in the sea.

"Yuki!! I'll block [Plague]!! Fight the sea serpent as you are!!"

[Got it!]

"This is the magical girl of [Hope] announcing!! An unusual situation

has occurred where magical girls hostile to humanity have appeared in the trial!!"

Magical girls of [Plague]

The final apostle who only showed mad helplessness in the original work was now hostile to humanity.

'It's different from Animus who tried to test and change humans!'

I continuously informed the observatory that I was in complete hostile relations with the magical girls of [Plague].

"The enemy is born 3-star magical girls of [Plague]!! Multiple beings with the same face!! Be careful!!"

The observatory used communication magic so that each magical girl could know the appearance of [Plague] after hearing my radio. The communication magic was delivered in real-time to all combatants as images.

[We have delivered the appearance of the magical girls of Plague to everyone.]

[Confirmed! Still no reaction in all areas except the trial scene, other than the appearance of very few black lion demons!]

Magical girls of [Plague] being shot down one by one by the huge white beams emitted by the Galateas. And they were just avoiding the white morning stars I threw and interfering little by little as they got some leeway.

'They seem much weaker than the Divine Maiden... maybe even weaker than Yuki or Hana, is this the price of forcibly increasing their numbers?'

The magical girls of [Plague] with such meager starlight that it was hard to believe they were born 3-star magical girls were preparing to release while painfully stealing starlight with their scales.

Creak

Creak

Scales coming down at a miserable speed with a rusty sound.

It was due to the meager amount of starlight that didn't reach great authority.

If so, there was no need to forcibly call 3-star magical girls here as reinforcements.

I instructed the 3-star magical girls in charge of defense in each region to stand by so they could prepare for unexpected situations.

"Cover teams, please trust me and engage in battle as you are! I will block everything!"

"Understood!"

As soon as they heard my instructions, the on-site cover teams on dozens of platforms all began to project firepower towards the giant sea serpent. Standing in their respective positions as practiced dozens of times, they cast unique skills or controlled white self-propelled guns.

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

With huge explosive sounds, shells fired from white self-propelled guns and attacks containing numerous colors from magical girls advanced drawing brilliant lines.

Numerous starlights advancing towards the writhing sea serpent.

But they disappeared in the raging waves and whirlpools without leaving even a sound.

"Prepare next attack!"

"Don't shoot one by one! Shoot all together at once!"

"Preparation complete!!"

"Fire!!"

"Fire!!"

The cover team completely turned their backs on the magical girls of [Plague], leaving all interception to me

'Everyone is fighting trusting me...'

Then as the magical girl of [Hope], I had to use infinite starlight to stop them.

I created a white bow, then prepared a huge transformative strike that had deleted thousands of missiles.

White arrow

Power protecting humans

Hope illuminating tomorrow

"Disappear without interfering!"

Twang!!

A huge white trajectory advancing forward shot from my hand.

And a flash.

Boooom—!

When a huge flash exploded that temporarily dyed the red sky white, magical girls focusing on cover on the white platforms turned around startled.

"Argh!!"

"How could this be... right after birth."

"How futile!"

Dozens of [Plague] disappearing with death throes. Seeing that sight, the cover team showed even stronger trust and resumed attacking the sea serpent.

'They're quickly scattering while being conscious of me.'

Because the magical girls of [Plague] quickly scattered with black starlight as soon as they confirmed my power, I couldn't reduce more than a certain number at once even if I used huge miracles continuously.

'...And when the number is reduced to some extent, they appear with small rifts.'

Dark sea where fire and waves rage under the red sky.

Small rifts gathered on the sea where Yuki's group and the sea serpent are fighting in huge waves and hundreds of starlights containing flames are raging.

Swish

Swish

Swish

Unlike the rifts that kept opening while spewing out black lions in the first trial, these quickly closed after releasing one magical girl of [Plague]. Reports came in that only black lions like in the first trial, not [Plague], were coming out of small rifts at other scenes except here.

"Yahoo! It's the world!"

"Wow?! Fire! Water! So colorful!"

"We're born into this world!! Freedom!!"

The power possessed by the endlessly born magical girls of [Plague] was feeble, but the scales attached to their backs continuously absorbed starlight automatically, interfering with the magical girls.

"We've gathered enough!"

Through hundreds of white unique skills emitted by me and Galatea, [Plague] who barely survived and succeeded in staying for a certain time tried to take out the scale of release with a joyful voice. If that is activated, at least one or two attacks that a born 3-star magical girl could make would burst out.

Crack

"Where do you think you're going."

A white goddess dozens of meters tall that I summoned with Ichika's unique skill grabbed and burst [Plague] who tried to attack other magical girls. Then it held her corpse and made a huge swing to attack other [Plague] nearby.

"It's the goddess of [Beginning]!! She's attacking us!!"

"We're going to serve a different goddess now!!"

"Being trapped in one body was hell!!"

"You showed us hell!!"

Due to the characteristics of the avatars I summoned, they all resembled the goddess of [Beginning], and seeing that, the magical girls of [Plague] tried to attack while gathering meager black starlight with childish jeers mixed with anger.

'Don't they know that the ones who cursed them were the other three goddesses?'

I could gradually understand why the magical girls of [Plague] were hostile to humanity and participating in the trials.

Unlike in the original work where the three goddesses were indifferent to the trials, it seemed they had manipulated things so that the souls of [Plague] magical girls would be reborn in the rifts where demons were born instead of demons.

[Revelation] who didn't have the fate of destruction like the apostles.

[War] who volunteered for the trials herself and disappeared.

[Death] who switched souls and changed fate.

Unlike the three apostles, [Plague] born in demons based on endlessly dividing abnormal souls had weak starlight compared to the authority they possessed.

[Plague] disappearing and appearing repeatedly in real-time to attacks from Galatea and me even now.

"Argh!"

"How could this be!!"

"We were just born!!"

'Though one is weak, even just existing in certain numbers is a big hindrance.'

Their mere existence steals starlight from magical girls, and using the gathered starlight, they fire a fatal blow to other magical girls except me.

If the magical girls of [Plague] are left alone, we won't be able to defeat the trial demon.

One fortunate thing was that the trial demon itself, born purely from the will of the stars, hadn't changed much. And that a magical girl who knows better than anyone about the trials before they changed was dealing with it.

'Yuki! I'm counting on you!'

I endlessly intercepted [Plague] who absorbed and released starlight, interfering with the magical girls like that.

Chapter 119 : Incomplete Combustion (1)

Perhaps from the moment I abandoned everything I had experienced and fled to another past.

Because it feels like I'm living in a dream, not the real life that had continued from before.

Because it feels like I'm hiding in your warmth that changed everything.

Something that was burning deep in my heart seems to have gone out.

* * *

"Dodge!! To the right!!"

"Right?! Where are you talking about!! That's the sea serpent's tail!!"

Nayeon's face turned pale, completely abandoning her military-style speech in the urgently unfolding situation.

In the midst of the sea serpent's rampage filling her vision, which direction was she supposed to dodge?

Boooom—

The sight of the huge tail writhing in the seawater looked like several small hills wriggling and moving. In front of this sea serpent controlling this vast sea, she felt insignificant controlling just a handful of seawater.

'This is on a completely different level from dealing with small demons coming up on the shore!!'

Nayeon was simply confused by this whole situation.

Thud

Without answering that, Yuki forcibly pushed Nayeon's head to the right while riding the waves with the group and approaching the giant snake.

"Whoa?!"

Vision tilted to the right. Waves were tilting as much as the tilted vision.

"Uwaaaa?!"

"Poison gas!! Hold your breath!!"

The group was sliding on the right water surface in a completely lying position.

The sea serpent's surging tail brushed over the group's heads like a roof, sweeping their hair.

Swish

The poison gas glistening on the surface of the sea serpent's entire body passed by narrowly, melting the ends of the group's hair a little.

Hair ends melted away as if held to a fire.

Nayeon screamed, suddenly reminded of her father's thinning hair before she returned rejuvenated from Elysion.

"Eek?!"

"Well done!!"

"We just need to keep dodging like this as we go!"

"I-I see."

"Now again!!"

"Again?!"

Waves tilted again.

Attack shot towards the response team.

Guooooo—

Sticky killing intent.

Acrid smell.

Another attack narrowly brushed past.

Poison shot from the sea serpent's head as large as a ship narrowly brushed over the group's heads like a water cannon. The poisonous breath bounced off the surrounding raging waves and whirlpools, spreading around the response team.

"Whoa?! What do we do now?!"

"If we fall off here, it'll attack from behind, so we have to go straight ahead!!"

"Really!! Never!! Going on foreign dispatch duty again!!"

Following Yuki's shouted orders, Nayeon floated the group on sea foam and slid at full speed towards the sea serpent's body, accelerating as much as possible as if surfing.

Hisssss

As the poison spread in the sea surrounded the response team riding the waves, Nayeon tried to float into the air, abandoning the waves, but Chen Lihua urgently pressed her shoulder.

"If we float in the air here, our starlight will be absorbed by [Plague]!! I'll decompose the poison, so keep going forward!!"

"Ugh?! This is really driving me crazy!!"

Flash—!!

Yuki deployed a flame barrier to protect Nayeon and Lihua. At the same time, dozens of lightning bolts generated from Lihua's shoulder heated up with vibrations and swept the sea surface.

Woooong—!!

Crackle

Plasma spread like glowing vines with the skull-resonating sound unique to high-voltage current.

Steam evaporating with a sour smell whenever it encounters lightning.

Hiss—

From the acrid steam came a sour smell that stung the nose along with tremendous heat. Every time the group advanced by decomposing seawater through high-voltage current, the sea serpent spasmodically spewed poison.

Guooooo—

Raging waves.

Shooting poison.

Ear-piercing roar.

Hiss

Hiss

Nayeon advanced through the poison-filled sea protected by Yuki's flame barrier and Lihua's lightning. The more they advanced through the endlessly raging waves, the more fierce attacks from the black sea serpent filling their vision continued.

"..."

While gauging the gradually narrowing distance with the sea serpent, Yuki still felt like she was walking in a daze through a dream.

No.

Perhaps from the day she returned to the past.

From the day she met Hikari.

Yuki felt like she had been living half in a dream.

'Why does Hikari trust me so much?'

A thought that suddenly occurred while fighting a monster that could only come from myths.

A thought one shouldn't have on a battlefield where hundreds of flames sparkle over the raging sea with surging waves and whirlpools.

If someone could see her thoughts, they would probably curse at her for thinking so nonchalantly in this situation, calling her crazy. But Yuki wasn't living as fiercely in the returned time as she used to.

The incompletely burned firewood only spewed out embers, fighting weakly relying on past memories.

-*Why aren't you trying to save people!!*

-*We're magical girls... we're beings that protect everyone!*

-*We'll surely become happy!!*

The words her past self had spoken seemed to echo, urging on her pathetic current self.

A world rushing towards destruction. The world Yuki lived in desperately.

Yet a world that failed.

The incompletely combusted spark finally returned, finding the key hidden by the goddess of [Beginning].

To a world where there was a kind girl who watched her fight from another universe.

Thus her role ended.

Ah,

I see.

Why her heart only pounds and she feels happy when by that girl's side.

Why she only feels alive when listening to that girl's words.

Now in this world, only that girl recognizes the traces of Yuki's fierce life.

Now in this world, only that girl can share the fierce memories of Yuki's life.

The third star that bloomed while fighting demons.

The comrades she faced back-to-back with while crying.

The small happiness she barely found in a desolate world.

The evidence of her struggles in a world heading towards destruction.

All gone.

A painful but fiercely lived history.

In the changed past, only Hikari who came to greet her affirmed all of Yuki's lost history.

'I couldn't fully exist in this world except by Hikari's side.'

The current Yuki is not the Yuki who should exist in July 2012, but a foreign substance that returned with memories of changed past and future. But no one knows that, and people around her only see her as the ordinary Yuki of 2012.

Dad

Lihua

Natasha

Asya

They couldn't recognize Yuki Shikishima, the foreign substance who returned from the future.

They didn't know her as the wounded girl, the final magical girl.

They didn't know the fierce trajectory of life Yuki had lived.

Yuki Shikishima couldn't fully exist except by Hikari's side.

Though she couldn't say it proudly, Yuki Shikishima certainly existed in a world heading towards destruction.

What is her current self?

"We should prepare to board the sea serpent soon!"

"..."

"Yuki?"

Chen Lihua looked at the silent Yuki with questioning eyes. In the original world, she was a cynical girl who distrusted the world after experiencing certain things in America.

Yuki fought watching each other's backs with Chen Lihua who had a cold and twisted sense of justice, not the kind and righteous friend Chen Lihua.

"Te-team leader!! Did you inhale poison fumes? Should I rinse you with clean water?"

Nayeon turned pale in an unfamiliar battle. In the original world, she was a hedgehog-like girl protecting her hometown for her parents to return to.

Yuki had met Nayeon, not the rookie magical girl who belatedly came out into the world, but the powerful magical girl desperately protecting her hometown sea while longing for parents who didn't

return.

'It changed.'

Everything changed.

The sea serpent that turned unprepared Europe into a wasteland.

Magical girls who distrusted and fought each other to absorb each other's stars, perishing together.

Adults who coveted magical girls' power and died by demons.

A messed up world.

Unreasonable fate.

Extinct humanity.

Even so, Yuki lived fiercely there.

She fiercely proved herself even while shouting false happiness and fleeting dreams.

Even if they were painful times.

Yuki's time continued there.

"...Magical girls."

"Hm?"

"Yes?"

"Magical girls are beings that protect everyone... right?"

"You're stating the obvious."

"It's something I heard to death from the company commander at the unit."

"..."

Now what she desperately shouted was common sense that everyone knew naturally.

Yuki laughed because it felt somewhat disappointing and empty.

Though it should be something to be happy about.

Though it was words spread by a friend who said she changed because of Yuki's words.

In a world that changed to her ideals without any effort, Yuki couldn't burn truly.

"I'm sorry for saying useless things. Let's charge onto the sea serpent soon. Everyone did well."

"Don't speak in such a solemn tone, it's scary."

"..."

Lihua hesitated, about to say something while looking at Yuki like that. Yuki smiled at Lihua and Nayeon, then wistfully looked up at the white light fighting in the sky.

Chapter 120 : Incomplete Combustion (2)

In the time heading towards the hope I so desperately wanted.

In this place where I thought I had abandoned everything and come.

By your side, who alone recognizes the past I abandoned, I might have been so happy to exist as a complete self with all pieces filled.

I might have pretended not to know.

That I hadn't changed even in the changed time.

* * *

"Haaaah!"

"Uwaaaa!"

As soon as Yuki and Lihua broke through all attacks and approached the black sea serpent's body, they wrapped their entire bodies in starlight and approached the demon while blocking the poison with flames and lightning.

Hiss!!

Poison gas spewing from the sea serpent's entire body.

It was as if fog had set in, with smoke that stung the eyes filling their vision.

Poison mist that seemed to not allow even stepping on it for those alive.

Hiss!!

Yuki and Lihua advanced forward, burning away the poison mist while raising even larger flames and lightning that were protecting their entire bodies. As if walking through a forest filled with darkness holding torches.

"If we burn all of these!!"

"Haah!!"

Whoosh

Crackle

The poison gas flew away from the flames and lightning energy wrapped around Yuki and Lihua's bodies, spewing acrid smoke, and soon there was no more poison mist to be found on the path ahead.

"Whew! At this rate we should be able to advance!"

Yuki nodded silently in response to Lihua's words. Seeing this, Lihua narrowed her delicate eyebrows and called out casually.

"...Yuki?"

"Yes?"

"Are you okay? You've been a bit strange since earlier. It feels like you're not concentrating and just fighting haphazardly..."

"I'm sorry. I'll focus."

"..."

Yuki and Lihua advanced forward again.

After Nayeon's desperate efforts to break through the waves and whirlpools, Yuki and Lihua finally climbed onto the sea serpent's body they had caught up to. Feeling their footsteps, the sea serpent resisted by twisting its huge body this way and that.

Guuuuung—

Sea and sky flipped instantly.

Strong winds were blowing enough to make hair stand on end.

The more the sea serpent incessantly flipped its huge body, Yuki and Lihua who had clung to its body and climbed up felt the sky and ground flipping countless times with strong winds. Violent resistance where they could do nothing but endure while gripping the ground.

Whoosh—

Sound of huge waves

Whirlpools filling their vision

Through the raging scenery, Nayeon could be seen wrapped in blue starlight, frantically moving around calming the sea waves. She had now begun to freely use the evasive maneuvers Lihua and Yuki had taught her earlier on her own.

Vibrations felt at the fingertips of Yuki and Lihua gripping the ground.

"Kyaa?!"

"Ugh...!!"

"Th-the demon is trying to go into the sea!!"

"Kugh...!!"

The sea serpent tried to plunge its head into the sea with a huge roar. Seeing this, Nayeon tried to create a whirlpool hundreds of meters in size by magically controlling where the sea serpent's head was heading.

"Huaaaah!! Split apaaaart!!!"

Blue starlight shining clearly even amidst thousands of waves raised by the sea serpent. By the magic shot by the sea fairy driving away the ominous rapids, the sea moved and created a new flow.

Boooom—

The space emptied by a whirlpool rotating as large as the one raised by the sea serpent.

The sea serpent, which had tried to plunge its head below the surface, belatedly realized there was no water, but collided into the emptied waves causing huge vibrations.

Guuuuuung—!!!

Even in the impact that felt like heaven and earth were flipping, Yuki and Lihua who had climbed onto the body sparkled with starlight and absolutely did not fall off.

Hiss!!

The poison gas flowing through the sea serpent's entire body scattered with the impact. And attacks shooting towards the sea serpent that received a shock for the first time due to the unexpected collision.

[Commencing simultaneous firing!!]

[Fire!!]

Hundreds of flames

Hundreds of trajectories

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

■■■■■—!!!

A scream of shock from the sea serpent rather than the angry roar it had been making until now.

For the first time, the sea serpent suffered as it took the cover team's simultaneous fire through the scattered poison gas.

As soon as they saw this, Yuki and Lihua began running along the sea serpent's body.

"Now's our chance!!"

"Yes!"

[The cover team informs the response team!!! Like now!! If we give a big shock like now, our attacks seem to be effective!!]

-This is the magical girl of [Sea]! Wh-when the sea serpent rises again... I'll try to create an opportunity!!

Running frantically along the writhing black path.

Yuki looked at the sky.

Small rifts were forming in the sky.

[Plague] rushed in from there.

Hikari intercepted [Plague] with dazzling white light.

'Hikari...'

Why do you trust me?

Why do you keep me by your side?

-Because Yuki is the best magical girl!

If you believe in me, I can always be the best magical girl.

But I don't know why you believe in me.

'Tell me.'

So I can exist in this dream-like reality.

So the spark with barely any embers left doesn't go out.

"We've arrived!!"

Yuki and Lihua saw the sea serpent's huge head with its mouth open, unable to escape the shock, in front of their eyes.

In the erased history, they always entered through the most vulnerable mouth to attack when facing huge demons.

In the history where magical girls originally had no means of escape, it ended with self-destruction.

But now magical girls had means of escape.

"Now if we just enter through the mouth there...!"

Gugugugung—!!

Lihua and Yuki, who had been running at full speed from the sea serpent's body to its neck, hesitated at the vibrations felt under their feet.

The sea serpent started to come to its senses and tried to rise.

It was swinging its tail this way and that, racing across the sea, trying to go back into the water.

"Kyaa!"

Though flustered on the shaking body, Yuki unconsciously recalled the experience of climbing onto a demon's back sometime. The memory of drawing attention on the frantically shaking huge body.

Whoosh!

What she created was a scythe made of flames.

The [Flame] prepared by the goddess of [Beginning] to hide [Resurrection] was weak, but could use the powers of all apostles.

"..."

Yuki's shabby weapon existed as remnants left by the goddess of [Beginning].

Swoosh—!

Yuki swung it down with all her might.

Though it didn't have the transcendent cutting power used by the magical girl of [Death], it should be enough to draw the demon's attention.

Thwack!!

Though the blade longer than the upper half of a human body stabbed in, because the body was so huge, the sea serpent was still racing towards the water without minding the wound.

Whoosh!

Flames blazing dazzlingly in Yuki's hand. Seeing that, Lihua also generated powerful lightning bolts descending from her shoulders.

"Lihua!!"

"Yes!!"

Attacks being fired.

Rumble!!

Whoosh!!

When two powerful destructive forces exploded over the wound cut by the scythe, the sea serpent writhed in pain and momentarily raised its body upright with the foul smell of burning flesh.

The sea serpent's neck straightened up as if in its original form.

"Once more!!"

"Uwaaaa!!"

Flames and lightning exploding again

The sea serpent's scream echoed again.

■■■■■—!!!

[Magical girl of the Sea!! Now's the time!!]

"Split apaaaart!!"

Booooom—!!!

As much as she had prepared for a longer time than before.

As much as she had clearly confirmed her role in the huge battle.

Nayeon's magic unleashed with a shout contained more confidence and starlight than before. Nayeon's senses, sharpened as much as her gradually growing confidence, whispered.

That now was the best chance to defeat the enemy.

Guuuu—!!

Below the sea serpent's jaw, which was lowering its body raised unconsciously due to pain, from the pain that had returned. That place was no longer the sea but a huge whirlpool.

■■■■—!!!

The sea serpent that had been toying with the magical girls while controlling the sea until now was no longer controlling the sea, but had become something that would just be swept away.

Guuuuuung—!!!

Huge vibrations spread over the shallow water surface.

The sea serpent spread out due to unexpected pain.

The magical girls who had been watching everything from the aerial fortresses rained down attacks all at once.

[All areas!! Commence simultaneous firing!!]

[Fire!!]

Bang

Bang

Bang

Bang

Flashes, flames and explosions.

To not miss this golden opportunity that seemed like it would never come again, maximum firepower was projected from dozens of makeshift fortresses positioned in the air, and explosions and aftermath incomparable to anything so far swept in.

"Huaaaaaaaa!!!"

"Uuuugh!!"

Yuki and Lihua endured the aftermath from the cover team's firing that had become stronger and closer than before, as they had gotten closer to the sea serpent's head. Then they got up and ran frantically, preparing to jump off the tip of the sea serpent's head.

Twang!

"Now's the time!!"

They felt a floating sensation, and soon their gaze turned downward.

What they saw at their feet was the sea serpent's huge jaw.

Yuki and Lihua landed towards that spot and entered the sea serpent's mouth.

Chapter 121 : Incomplete Combustion (3)

"Be careful!! Small demons are coming out from inside the giant demon's throat!!"

"So what you told us during training was true..."

Swish

Swish

The dark mouth of the giant sea serpent was like a damp cave. And hundreds of black vipers stretching out like countless tentacles from the darkness. The vipers, born from the poison gas condensed on the damp walls, flicked their tongues and rushed in to eliminate the intruders.

Swish—!!

Yuki and Lihua had prepared for this situation for days, so they weren't very flustered even when hundreds of vipers rushed at them.

The two quietly drew up starlight.

"We need to get to the heart quickly before the sea serpent, the main body, comes to its senses!"

"Got it, Yuki."

Whoosh—!!

Rumble—!!

Red flames and dazzlingly bright lightning exploded, burning away hundreds of vipers.

The vipers crumbled away pitifully while burning with a foul smell.

Whoosh!

Magic shot forth, purifying the acrid poison gas and creepy vipers in the dark cave.

Hiss—!!

Two magical girls advanced while burning away the poison gas pooled thickly on the slimy floor. The path they advanced on stretched out as two distinct colors in the darkness due to starlight.

Swish!!

Resistance intensified as they approached the giant demon's heart.

The frequency of reckless attacks gradually increased, and the vipers' attacks approached like a wall.

Guooo!!

Hundreds of vipers gathered in one place, moving as one body, and combined into a giant leech-like form. They rushed at Yuki and Lihua with a heavy sound.

A form like vipers clumped together in oil sludge scooped from a sewer.

A disgusting monster that could only appear in a nightmare.

Black. Dirty. Damp. Writhing.

Sour with the scent of poison.

Guooo!!

Even Chen Lihua, who had a strong stomach and bold personality, almost felt nauseous for a moment, but despite the disgusting viper mass rushing in spewing stench, Yuki just maintained an expressionless face and swung her flame sword.

Instinctive movement derived from memory.

'I've seen plenty of sights more horrific than this.'

Whoosh!!

A wave of flames illuminating the darkness.

A dazzling radiance like several flame horses charging forth.

The flame army advanced towards the disgusting viper mass, pouring down a baptism of purification.

Boo.!!

The monster with its disgusting form melted in the baptism of flames and scattered away.

'If we get held up by small demons like this, it'll get tough.'

Even amidst the horrific sight, Yuki's mind was somehow hazy.

'Let's move in an efficient way.'

The inside of the giant trial demon's body was like a small rift in itself. Although an anomaly of [Plague] magical girls being born was occurring in rifts generated outside, the phenomena originating from the sea serpent, the subject of the trial, were not much different from Yuki's memories.

Guooo!!

Guooo!!

Hundreds of viper demons were gathering again here and there in the dark cave leading to the demon's heart, appearing as colonies with a disgusting smell.

Poison gas grew stronger as they gathered.

Guooo!!

Guooo!!

Colonies began to fill the dark cave like walls.

A disgusting wall of demons tried to block the two girls' path.

Lihua almost stopped in her tracks for a moment seeing that sight.

"Whoa?! They've appeared again!! What should we do?!"

"Don't panic. We just need to keep burning them away as we advance before they pile up! We can't get surrounded!!"

"Understood...! You're so calm even in this situation. I'll trust only you, Yuki!"

Words sent with a trusting gaze from Lihua.

Trust.

Yuki's chest ached for a moment at those words uttered by Lihua.

-I'll trust only you, Yuki!

"..."

The inside of the sea serpent advancing according to Yuki's strategy was no different from other trial demons she had entered sometime before.

She was just taking the lead because she had experienced it.

She was just calm because she had experienced it.

According to the goddess of [Beginning]'s arrangement.

'It's not trust I earned...'

When the scarred girl who had only shed tears in the previous world stepped forward for the first time, the first battle she fought of her own will was clumsy and amateurish. But after that, the way people looked at her changed and the trust they sent changed.

Trust she had earned.

Even if the result was failure.

Even if it was incomparably smaller than now.

At least the things she achieved on her own in the previous world were entirely her own. Compared to those, the trust Lihua was sending somehow made her chest hurt.

If she had done better then, could she have received such trust from the Lihua of that time?

'...Let's focus.'

Even while thinking other thoughts in her head, the flame sword Yuki was holding advanced tracing a familiar path.

Whoosh

Advancing flames. Advancing magical girls.

In the dark passage that seemed endless. Finally, the source of power possessed by the trial demon was revealed.

"That's the heart!"

"Yes. If we destroy that, the trial demon will fall."

"Simpler than I thought... n-no."

Lihua held back her words to shake off the carelessness that had suddenly raised its head. Yuki, as if understanding Lihua's reaction, pretended not to notice.

A solution so easy once you know the answer.

Unity of magical girls, attacks using starlight.

The previous world was destroyed because they couldn't do that.

"..."

A giant heart gurgled while dripping sticky liquid between black tentacles. Yuki and Lihua drew up all their starlight to attack towards that place.

Whoooosh—!!

Blazing flames.

Dazzling lightning.

Two colors of starlight shining brilliantly, and the unique skills of the two people with the purest destructive power among all magical girls were fired.

Flames and lightning shooting forth, merging like a giant beam.

"Haaaah!!"

"Disappear!!"

Booooooooom—!!!

A pillar of flames blazing fiercely, stretching out to greedily burn everything away, and lightning split into hundreds of branches produced a chilling sound that made listeners think of death.

A storm of fire and lightning.

An attack destroying everything, burning away even the poison gas and air inside the previously dark cave.

Hiss—!!

But even after the dazzling flash of destruction passed, the demon's giant heart was still intact.

Hiss!!

With only the outer layer slightly burned, the heart gradually recovered its shape with poison gas from the black tentacles. Unlike other parts of the sea serpent, only the heart where black starlight was raging was withstanding Yuki and Lihua's attacks with overwhelming regenerative power compared to other trial demons.

'Is it affected by [Plague]'s magic power...!'

The curse of the three goddesses always appeared in the worst form

at the most crucial moment by throwing small pebbles like this.

"Wh-why?!"

"...Our firepower was insufficient."

Originally, the cover team and Hikari were supposed to deal with the sea serpent, and Nayeon was to join in to strike the heart.

'...[Plague] magical girls.'

Because they were held up by the sudden appearance of [Plague] magical girls, the roles of the cover team having their starlight absorbed and Hikari who rushed out to intercept were dispersed.

If the three response team members could have quickly entered the sea serpent's body as originally planned, there might have been a way. But because Nayeon was guiding the sea serpent, which was originally supposed to be handled by Hikari and the cover team.

Yuki and Lihua alone couldn't cope with this unexpected situation.

"..."

Self-destruction.

One method that could be implemented right now came to Yuki's mind.

The way to deal with trial demons in the original world.

Causing a huge starlight explosion by sacrificing one magical girl.

An attack unleashed by a bloomed born 2-star magical girl exploding all her starlight without protecting herself. Each time they passed through a trial like that, one magical girl was inevitably sacrificed.

'If I... had bloomed [Resurrection] earlier then.'

When Yuki bloomed [Resurrection] that could endlessly self-destruct while fighting the dragon of destruction, the final trial.

All trials had already ended by then.

"..."

In any case.

Self-destruction was the best option in the current situation where firepower was lacking due to the unexpected situation.

'This time, I should be the one to do it.'

Strangely, she didn't feel particularly afraid of choosing self-destruction.

Because as long as Hikari was alive, this world would gradually change to Yuki's ideal anyway.

Because as long as Hikari was alive, magical girls could be revived from death anyway.

Yuki's head was persuaded by plausible reasons, and her heart was numbed by dream-like haziness. So Yuki told Lihua in a really nonchalant tone.

"What... did you say?"

Lihua just stared blankly at Yuki after hearing that.

"..."

"...Then. I'll self-destruct now. Escape through the Threads of Fate..."

"Yuki."

"Yes?"

"Clench your teeth."

Slap

Lihua slapped Yuki's cheek.

Chapter 122 : Burning Love

Slap—

Stinging sensation felt on the cheek.

When Yuki's head tilted to one side and slowly turned back to look at Lihua again, Lihua had a regretful look in her eyes.

"Come to your senses, Yuki."

"..."

"Reality isn't a game or a joke. You know that best yourself!"

"...But."

"Even if you can be revived. If you choose death so easily...!!"

"..."

"Don't you know how the people watching you feel?"

"There's no other way."

If only I die, it can be solved.

There's no risk associated with death.

So then...

A voice interrupting the cruel and self-deprecating thoughts continued in Yuki's mind.

"Yuki."

A voice she had heard sometime before.

Natasha's navy blue ship advancing through the cold sea.

Lihua of 'that time' reproached Yuki who was hugging her knees in the blowing winter wind.

Cold anger.

The kind Lihua of 'this world' was spewing out the same cold anger as then.

'Ah... what did I... say.'

In the world Hikari created, a magical girl's life was precious. That's why they were able to come this far together.

What she had just said was the way of the 'destroyed world' that wasted magical girls' lives.

Yuki's sense of reality gradually returned at Lihua's calmly settled voice.

-Yuki.

Lihua's voice similar to that time.

But what was in it was worry, not cynicism.

Lihua asked Yuki, who was wandering in a dream, about the 'now'.

"Where is Yuki now?"

"In the trial demon... "

"Who are you with?"

"Comrades."

"What are Yuki's most precious people doing?"

Dad is in a shelter near home.

Hikari is fighting [Plague].

"Do they want Yuki to die?"

"N-no."

"Do you want to die now, Yuki?"

"..."

I wanted to live with them.

I love them.

'I... love.'

Drop

When that thought came to mind.

It felt like the colors of this world were gradually returning.

Colors being engraved again on the black and white photo that was full of achromatic colors.

Precious emotions.

The small room in the old house.

The blanket that smells of mom.

The rabbit pajamas worn for a long time.

The earthy smell from dad's rough hands.

Clumsily boiled miso soup and undercooked rice.

The girl who held my hand by the lake.

The warm grass smell and forest path of Elysion.

Memories of walking in the square wearing the same clothes.

A gentle world.

Yuki's time had not disappeared.

It was endlessly being created anew and continuing.

This was a world for Yuki.

'I am alive.'

For some reason, it felt like a long dream had finally ended. A certain dream that had followed from the throne of nothingness to Tokyo Station, from the moment she woke up after returning to the past until now.

Returning sense of reality.

Subsiding tinnitus.

Radio sounds clearly entered her ears.

[Response team!! Haven't you struck the demon's heart yet? The sea serpent is slowly trying to move!!]

-Team leader!! Answer!! The sea serpent is coming to its senses now!!

-Yuki?! Are you okay?? Can you tell us what the situation is?!

'Ah...'

I am alive here now.

I am still fighting now.

I am no longer alone.

Yuki's soul was still burning.

It was burning with love beyond survival instinct.

Heart pounder again.

'This is where I live.'

She had become friends with the kind and upright Lihua, not the

Lihua who hid her sense of justice in cynicism.

Thump thump thump

She had become comrades with Nayeon the rookie magical girl just starting to fight, not the Nayeon who had become strong through countless tragedies.

Thump thump thump

A reality where loved ones are still alive.

It was reality.

Yuki was still living fiercely in reality.

'I love this place.'

Slap!!

Yuki slapped her own cheek hard enough to echo in the cave. Hard enough for her cheek to swell red, for her mind to clear and foolish thoughts to flee.

"Whew, I'm sorry. I had some strange thoughts for a moment."

"Then let's fight fiercely again from now on!!"

"Yes!!"

"Think briefly!! Feel intensely!!"

Because that's how flames and lightning advance.

'Because now there are people by my side who want me to live...!'

Yuki thought of the way of the new world, not the way of the previous world.

Whoosh!

What Yuki created in one hand with a huge flame was a scale of flames.

[Plague]'s scale

"This works exactly the same way as what the magical girls of [Plague] use. It absorbs and releases starlight."

Yuki looked at the demon's heart endlessly regenerating while spewing poison gas.

Demons are also remnants of starlight born from the wounds of stars.

If she absorbs starlight with the scale of greed and then bursts it, she can cause an explosion.

"An explosion stronger than the heart's regeneration with that?"

"No. It's not enough for such regenerative power."

"Then what should we do?"

Yuki quietly looked up.

The dark ceiling.

No, the demon's back skin.

* * *

I was anxious because of Yuki's radio that wasn't coming through.

'What happened?'

Even now, the endlessly surging [Plague] were showing increasingly cunning movements as they died, trying to steal starlight from the cover team.

Individuals hiding under the white platforms and secretly stealing starlight.

"Uhahaha! I was stuck here invisibly like this!"

"Eek?! Since when?!"

Groups pushing all their starlight into one individual.

"Hey! We gathered it all!"

"Pour everything into this one!"

"Hehehe! They wouldn't have known about this!"

The magical girls of [Plague] who stole starlight using various methods fired attacks with ominous black starlight flickering from their scales of greed.

Flash—!!

Black beams. Plague's attack.

Where the attacks shining with black starlight hit, the curse of plague was scattered along with an ominous energy.

Limbs paralyzed, fever throughout the body, suffering extreme pain... the curse of black plague.

"Kyaaaah!!!"

"Ugh!! Uwaaah!!"

"Kugh! I-I've been hit by the attack...!"

[Fortress 3 has been neutralized!! F-fortress 5 was just hit by an attack too!!]

The half-formed magical girls of [Plague] born from rifts were gradually breaking down the cover team magical girls, causing enough pain with just the meager level of starlight stolen from other magical girls.

'Damn it!'

I continued to eliminate the magical girls of [Plague] moving separately.

"Haha! I got you!!"

Baaaang!!

The cheering magical girl of [Plague] was engulfed by the white morning star I threw and disappeared.

No matter how many I dealt with.

[Plague] were endlessly flowing out.

-Hikari!!

Yuki's radio came through.

"Yuki!! What's going on?!"

-Steam will be visible on the sea serpent's back from now on! Concentrate all attacks there!!

"Got it!!"

I kept intercepting the magical girls of [Plague] while watching the sea serpent's back.

Hiss—!

Very faintly, very dimly. There was clearly a point on the sea serpent's back that was heating up and emitting steam.

I felt Yuki and Lihua's starlight.

The sea serpent's weakness that couldn't be known at all from the outside.

That spot was turning red and emitting steam.

-Hikari!! That's it!! That's the sea serpent's weak point!!

"This is the magical girl of [Hope] announcing!! All interception teams!! Please fire simultaneously at the spot emitting steam!!"

[Understood!! Everyone commence simultaneous firing!!]

All magical girls with starlight remaining amidst [Plague]'s plunder attacked that spot.

The Galateas who had dealt with [Plague] also attacked that spot.

Starlight poured down like a meteor shower in attacks of various colors.

Boom-boom-boom—!!

The back skin that had heated up and evaporated poison gas due to attacks fired from the inside couldn't repel the magical girls' attacks. Through the sea serpent's horribly opened back skin, Yuki and Lihua facing the heart could be seen.

■■■■■■—!!!

Miserable scream. Final struggle.

Everyone's attacks hit through the sea serpent's opened back skin as it twisted its body this way and that. Over the sea serpent's heart almost disappearing from the simultaneous firing, a huge flame blazed up again.

Flame lotus

Fire of enlightenment

[The world I love is!! Here!! I am living here!!]

Yuki's inner voice echoed in the divinity.

Yuki's new fate was burning.

A new fate pioneered by herself, separated from the goddess.

The fate of the new world.

[Love]

'Burning love...!'

When I heard that, for some reason my heart swelled.

'Yuki...!'

The desperate voice of a girl always feeling intimidated, only remembering failures. It was like reading the true final page of ＜Magical Girl HAZARD＞.

As if seeing the true ending of the novel I hadn't seen.

As if seeing the protagonist's true growth I hadn't seen.

I blessed the girl's new growth and protected them from [Plague]'s offensive.

"Everyone help!! Help Yuki!!"

[All magical girls!!! Please fire towards the flame flower!! This is the final moment!!]

"Uwaaaaa!!! Sea, split apaaaart!!!"

From all silver ships floating in the sky.

From all white platforms floating in the sky.

From magical girls racing across the sea.

From magical girls shooting lightning.

Countless starlights sent helping hands towards the flame lotus.

Sent helping hands to the girl who had struggled alone in a world heading towards destruction.

Yuki Shikishima was now loved by the world.

She was burning anew, facing a new world.

Fully Bloomed 3-star Magical Girl of [Love]

Yuki Shikishima

"Argh?!"

"This... can't be!!"

The sea serpent's heart disappeared in the burning flames, and the magical girls of [Plague] hid their forms into the disappearing rifts.

The second trial that began on the dark waves ended with the blooming of a red lotus.

Chapter 123 : Atonement (1)

July 10

"So from now on, I'm thinking of... reducing my contact with Hikari a bit... hehe."

"I see."

"I was too dependent, wasn't I? I'm sorry."

"No, you weren't."

"It's not that I've come to dislike Hikari! Please understand that!"

"Of course I know."

"Hehe."

In the forest of Elysion we entered holding hands, Yuki revealed her inner thoughts.

"I won't cling to the past I abandoned and ran away from anymore, because I'm living in the present now."

I won't be held back by the past anymore.

I won't rely on old memories anymore.

"Now... I really want to face this world."

"Do you want to forget everything? Then I won't talk about the past to Yuki anymore."

Yuki shook her head at my words.

"Atonement... atonement for abandoning the past... I'll do it while

helping everyone now."

"..."

"It's a burden that will remain in my heart forever now, so I'll keep carrying it."

"I see."

Yuki, who ran ahead a little, struck a confident pose for the first time and said.

She faced me with her hands on her hips, chest puffed out proudly.

"Because I'm a magical girl! I realized it too... too late, even after saying it myself."

Tears were slightly pooled in the corners of Yuki's eyes as she smiled proudly.

The girl who had been bound by the past and complacent in the present was now truly trying to move towards the future.

"I have to protect the people living now! That's my dream!"

"..."

"Ugh... tears are coming out. What should I do."

I silently wiped Yuki's tears.

"How did you come to realize that while fighting?"

"Well, you see."

Burning love.

I thought it was a keyword twisted once around like words symbolizing the trajectory of life, like Ichika and Hana.

'To think the word itself was the answer.'

A fate that only transmits memories to the next world in a world

heading towards destruction.

The way for a fate that has already served its purpose to move towards a new path.

'A new alias.'

Animus, Yuki... and me.

A second alias given to those who pioneer a new fate, surpassing even the world.

Yuki, who had bloomed the fate of [Love], was quietly looking at me. It seemed as if a red flame was quietly burning in those eyes.

One star

Ichika's storm

The energy flickering in the eyes of girls with strong hearts was now felt in Yuki's eyes too.

"To truly love, you have to face it, not hide behind it."

Yuki's self-defined 'love' seemed like a somewhat strict definition.

To the point where I felt a bit small the moment I heard it.

'Even the love between parents and children is love... no, if we say that the process of becoming independent from parents and understanding them is also love, then Yuki's words are correct.'

Even so, I felt dissatisfied with the definition of 'love' that seemed too strict for a magical girl to advocate. Somehow, the things Yuki was saying, who seemed to have grown a little after the battle, were stronger and stricter than before.

Because such a Yuki seemed to have completely broken free from <Magical Girl HAZARD>. Because such a Yuki no longer seemed to be a weak girl dependent on me.

Feeling both proud and regretful, I said mischievously.

"Is that so? I think being protected is also a kind of love."

"Hehe, is that so?"

Pat pat

Yuki looked at me with fond eyes and patted my head.

A kind adult doesn't bother to refute a child's whining.

'This is completely treating me like a kid.'

I wonder if she would treat me like this if she knew that by my original age, I would be calling Yuki's father, Ryota Shikishima, as an older brother.

'Should I go to Yuki's house sometime and call Ryota "big bro"?'

For a moment I felt such a childish rebellious thought, but I gave up.

Somehow, I felt like revealing my real age and original gender would create an inexplicable barrier with everyone.

'Sometimes it's best to quietly let things go.'

Anyway, after living as a woman for over two years, my perception of gender had been blurred for a long time. I didn't want to come out and create subtle barriers with everyone right before the trials.

Trial.

The magical girls of [Plague] who appeared to sabotage the second trial fled into the rifts as soon as the second trial ended.

Those were holes leading to the wounds of stars.

Another world that originally forbade entry to humans or magical girls.

Even Animus, who volunteered for the trials and truly opposed humanity to test them, couldn't touch the rifts.

Enemy of humanity.

Pus of the stars.

I set the magical girls of [Plague] as absolute enemies of humanity that cannot be compromised with, different from Animus or Scavenger.

'The curse of the three goddesses was only once.'

Not just petty curses that merely weaken the opponent's body and lead to death. The kind of curse they uttered to completely ruin <Magical Girl HAZARD>.

Power that distorts the world.

Such a curse will probably be thrown in the next third trial as well.

The magical girls of [Plague] reborn in demons due to the curse hadn't properly descended for long, and didn't seem to have their own beliefs like Animus.

'They were extremely weak.'

It was enough to interfere with the trial, but even without Yuki's awakening, if we had more time, we could have easily overcome the second trial with help from magical girls waiting in Europe.

'If that had happened, there would have been some casualties though.'

This time, fortunately, we were able to end it quickly with Yuki's awakening. But if [Plague] is strengthened by receiving a new curse from the three goddesses next time, will we be able to repel them like now?

"Whew."

"[Plague]?"

"Huh? H-how did you know?"

"It's written all over your face."

Poke

Yuki poked my cheek and chuckled.

Yuki no longer depended on me or clung to me, but walked beside me with a proud smile, trying to face people.

The girl with the strongest heart.

The girl who had burned all of [Resurrection] and became the weak [Flame] now became [Love].

"..."

Magical girl of [Love].

A great fate that truly penetrates the world, which all humans know naturally, but because of that.

'Maybe even more than [Hope]...'

More than [Hope] that will fade after overcoming difficult today, won't [Love] that faces reality with gratitude remain longer in this world protecting people?

"I'm counting on you, Yuki."

"Hm? Yeah! Leave it to me! If magical girls of [Plague] come, I'll defeat them all with the power of the new magical girl!"

"...Yeah."

I'm counting on you to protect people, Yuki.

So we walked around for a while and then dispersed to our respective homes.

I went to Elysion's square, while Yuki to her home in Japan.

Unlike the magical girls who were confused by the appearance of [Plague], the reaction of the whole world was extremely joyful. From the outside, it looked like we had completely blocked the very few demons that leaked from the rifts and fought and defeated the giant

sea serpent in one breath.

'They're treating me more and more like a goddess of victory.'

The evacuation that ended more smoothly than Japan and the characteristic of the battle taking place at sea, with no damage at all, also contributed greatly.

Absolute faith.

Now the magical girl of [Hope] was a huge faith itself that was believed without doubt.

From the moment the limit of faith surpassed a certain value, world leaders stopped calling me to meetings.

'It's a bit burdensome when they come themselves.'

Really.

Really truly burdensome.

The bodyguards who patrol and inspect the entire city including the square the day before visiting Elysion, and the way they act shamelessly accompanied by interpreters and aides unnecessary for me who can understand all languages.

Somehow they started treating me as something beyond the human world.

No, it's somewhat correct...

'I understand it's a matter directly related to their own safety, but.'

I just politely requested to be called to meetings from now on.

"Whew. Huh?"

As I was walking while thinking such complicated thoughts, I saw several golden girls gathered in front of me, whispering. They were sitting somewhere in an alley, discussing something with serious faces.

"So Lea said there's a culture called birthday parties outside!"

"B-birthday parties?"

"What's that?"

"It's a culture that blesses the day you were born into this world, like the day the goddess molded us from starlight!"

"Oh! That must be so joyful!"

"So let's celebrate the Divine Maiden's birthday among ourselves!"

"What about the Successor?"

"W-we don't have the right to dare celebrate the goddess's birthday."

"Right, that's something the Divine Maiden should start talking about first!"

"Ah... that's true. Only the priests have the right to celebrate sacred days."

I quietly sat down next to them and listened. They were each asserting their guesses on how to proceed with this unfamiliar culture called a 'birthday party'.

"The Divine Maiden's birthday?"

"Yes! Unlike us, the Divine Maiden was made by the goddess of [Beginning] right before the trial ritual... oh?"

"I see. In a way, the Divine Maiden is the youngest among you all."

"Successor?!"

"Tell me more about that story."

Chapter 124 : Atonement (2)

"Birthday?"

"Yes, it seems the children living in Elysion want to celebrate the day the Divine Maiden was born."

"Unnecessary. It would be better to declare a holy day for the Successor to exert influence instead."

"Is there a need to reject it so flatly?"

"...I'm just a part of the plan created last among the goddess's children anyway."

"..."

"The Successor and the first children don't need to worry about me. Even though the direction of the plan has changed, if the Successor exists, there's no need to be conscious of me."

Swish

The Divine Maiden expressed that there was no use in talking further and turned around completely to lie down. Then she quietly pulled the white blanket piled on the top floor of the lighthouse and hid.

Rustle

A slender hand stretched out from inside the blanket, fumbling around the box for something, then took out a pack of grape juice, inserted a straw, and went back inside the blanket.

Slurp

Stubborn refusal.

When she didn't want to talk anymore due to fatigue from overwork, the Divine Maiden issued an order to leave while eating something.

It seemed like there was no point in talking to the Divine Maiden who had switched to recovery mode, making straw noises inside the blanket.

"..."

After resolving the small rift that opened in America after the second trial, the Divine Maiden collapsed again.

'She's prepared grape juice and blankets on top of the lighthouse in anticipation of collapsing.'

At first, I deliberately dumped all the hard work on her and used her shamelessly, feeling upset by the Divine Maiden's indifference to humanity and mechanical attitude shown in the past.

'But from some point on, it was really just work that only the Divine Maiden could do.'

Seeing her take it for granted that she would collapse from starlight depletion due to my orders, and setting up the room layout considering optimal energy recovery, I felt somewhat pitiful.

An attitude of not caring about anything but the orders given to her.

Obedience to me, who was designated as the successor of the goddess of [Beginning].

A life of following and carrying out what was given.

[Revelation]

The Divine Maiden had always lived listening to the voice from above.

'While Yuki found her own new fate, the Divine Maiden is still empty.'

An apostle who grew up mechanically for the orders given by the

goddess of [Beginning] from inside an empty girl from the beginning, different from the apostles who grow up watching the fate of the world with the girl dwelling within.

An apostle indifferent to the world. The weakest apostle.

The Divine Maiden was also a magical girl..

Clumsy, indifferent, unskilled, inconsiderate, but.

The magical girl of [Revelation] clearly tried to prepare everything for me to adapt to this world.

School, identity, apartment... and Elysion.

As long as I had the will to save others, she was willing to hand over everything. She tried to help me move forward, albeit clumsily, watching the flow of stars from atop the lighthouse.

If I had been a girl who came from an era other than modern times; if I had been someone who hadn't read ＜Magical Girl HAZARD＞.

Could I have laughed at the things the Divine Maiden had prepared?

This girl too was born ignorant, and just moved forward making mistakes according to the orders of the goddess of [Beginning].

Suddenly, looking at the Divine Maiden closely again, she was very different from my first impression.

The Divine Maiden's face visible under the hood looked especially young and youthful.

The feet sticking out from the white cloth priestly robe looked especially small.

With this frail body, she desperately endured the destroyed world to carry out the orders of the goddess of [Beginning], led Elysion, and reached this point.

For me who knew the future and Yuki who lived the present fiercely, the Divine Maiden's efforts seemed alien and obstructive.

But can we both deny her very life?

"..."

"...You're still not gone. I'm not needed."

"Alright. Rest well."

Slurp

Leaving behind the sound of drinking grape juice, I headed outside the white lighthouse.

I thought that perhaps there was one best gift I could give to that girl.

* * *

July 11

"Successor, this is..."

The Divine Maiden was wearing ordinary modern clothes.

Her silver hair that was always let down was neatly gathered and tied, and the Divine Maiden's appearance in bright casual clothes was quite fresh in its own way.

Above all, modern clothing suited her very well.

"Happy birthday, Divine Maiden."

"Happy birthday!! Divine Maiden!!"

"Happy birthday!!"

[Congratulations on the birthday of Elysion's Unnamed Divine Maiden!]

The Divine Maiden, who had woken up with a disheveled face, was caught by me and the magical girl of [Wings] waiting at the entrance and changed clothes in an instant. And she was delivered to the square in that attire.

"This is very perplexing."

What was prepared in the square was a birthday party.

A fragrant smell rose from the numerous foods filling the tables, and magical girls who had taken time to celebrate the Divine Maiden's birthday were waiting, dressed in colorful clothes.

"It's the Successor's order. Take it easy and receive birthday wishes today."

"...I'm not the type to relax easily in crowded places."

"Then you can try a new experience from now on."

"This is truly unreasonable."

The Divine Maiden said while fidgeting with her skirt, but her face remained expressionless. Surrounding her, numerous magical girls who had bloomed entertainment and production magic approached.

Some magical girls were holding lots of paint.

Some magical girls were carrying all sorts of exercise equipment.

Some magical girls were holding numerous musical instruments.

In common, they were smiling at the thought of sharing their favorite hobbies with the always gruff Divine Maiden, a fresh newbie.

Stealthily

The Divine Maiden looked up and stared blankly at the hundreds of magical girls who had suddenly surrounded her.

'It's like that cover that was floating around the internet a lot.'

Hundreds of veteran magical girls with all sorts of hobbies approaching a silver-haired girl with flushed faces.

The Divine Maiden, who had taken off her hood and changed into modern clothes, had lost her usual intimidating aura, and because her appearance gave off a delicate and pure feeling, it felt strangely

erotic even though it wasn't an erotic situation at all.

-It's the smell of a newbie.

-My goodness... can I share a hobby with an introverted newbie?

-Th-this is... gulp.

The veteran magical girls seemed to have already smelled something.

"Oh right."

"Hm?"

"Find one thing you like to do while spending the day with the magical girls."

"..."

"It's an order."

"...I'd rather go to America one more time."

"Don't worry, the rifts are safe for now."

"Haah."

Rumble

Veterans from all fields rushed in to show the Divine Maiden a new world.

"Di-Divine Maiden!! Do you want to play the sa-saxophone together?"

"Gasp!! No!! Such an instrument!! Let's paint together with sticky paint!!"

"That sounds dirty!! Get out of the way!! Divine Maiden!! I'll teach you the joy of beautifully sculpting your body while sweating!!"

"The Divine Maiden is already beautiful!! Get lost!! Let's learn the pleasure of fishing together!!"

Before long, the Divine Maiden was caught by the magical girls and being dragged somewhere.

At first her hand was grabbed, then she was arm in arm, and then she was being carried.

Finally, hundreds of magical girls carried the Divine Maiden like an audience supporting a rock star who had jumped down, and headed somewhere in a rush.

"Uugh."

Though she clearly had the strength of a born 3-star magical girl to shake them off, whether because of my order or because she was originally the type not to use violence on people, the Divine Maiden was just helplessly dragged away by hundreds of girls.

As I was watching the sight of the Divine Maiden being gradually dragged out of Elysion's streets and into the forest.

A golden girl approached my side.

The magical girl of [Wings].

Probably the girl who cares about and thinks of the Divine Maiden the most among the girls from Elysion.

"Thank you."

"Iris."

"You intended to give the Divine Maiden a new chance, right?"

"Was it too obvious?"

"Hehe, no... I hoped for it."

Iris looked at the figure of the Divine Maiden disappearing, led by people, with somewhat regretful eyes. That gaze was directed not at the current situation, but more towards the past.

"The Divine Maiden... certainly ignored people in past history, but it

was because of her sense of duty to unconditionally carry out the orders given by the goddess of [Beginning]."

"..."

"We couldn't blame the Divine Maiden for being indifferent... who lived by orders and protected us according to orders."

"I don't hate the Divine Maiden because I didn't live through that time, I was just disappointed that she didn't try to find the right path herself. But..."

But

Perhaps because she didn't even have the freedom to head towards an unknown tomorrow.

Because she could only desperately fulfill the immediate reality.

She had no choice but to ignore things outside of what was given to her.

Now I truly understood that and couldn't help but sympathize with the Divine Maiden.

An empty life.

A life with nothing but orders.

One of the two girls who walked the hardship that even the goddess of [Beginning] who gave the orders anticipated and apologized for with tears.

I thought that in this world where she had helped so many people, I could no longer resent or blame the Divine Maiden. Because thanks to her indifference and selfishness in the past world, this world was able to receive the huge help of Elysion.

'Now I truly can't say that what the Divine Maiden did was unconditionally wrong.'

What remains now is the second chance given to the Divine Maiden

herself.

And...

"There's only one person left who can completely forgive the Divine Maiden now."

Chapter 125 : Atonement (3)

Pwooooo—

"Divine Maiden!! Harder!! More intensely!! Yes!! Ah!! Yes—!!"

A musical screaming next to the Divine Maiden who was blowing the saxophone indifferently without any tune.

Squish squish

"Divine Maiden!! Your hand movement is... skilled? Ah! Th-there!! Yes! Good!!"

An artist bursting into cheers next to the Divine Maiden who was smearing any color messily on the canvas.

Bounce bounce

"Haaaang!! Your posture collapsed!! Your bu-butt!! Your legs!! Ah!! Is this a beginner?!"

A fitness girl rejoicing at the Divine Maiden's messy squats as she carelessly lifted a barbell and stood up.

Chatter chatter

Hundreds of all kinds of magical girls were continuing their intense reactions while watching the Divine Maiden's clumsy and erotic movements, who had never experienced any cultural activities. After going through all sorts of hobbies like that, they finally reached games.

"..."

The Divine Maiden who suddenly stopped her actions while playing a game for a while.

"U-um? Why? It was g-good, why did you stop?"

The gaming magical girl who had been unable to hide her excitement while watching the Divine Maiden's clumsy hand movements felt somehow anxious. The more she remained silent with the pause button pressed on the portable game console she had lent, the greater the gaming magical girl's anxiety grew.

'Don't tell me she doesn't like games...?'

For the newbie who had been participating actively, albeit expressionlessly, in art, music, and exercise to stop at games.

'I was wrong to choose such a difficult game...!'

A huge mistake.

If this becomes known in magical girl society, she will be criticized on numerous gaming community sites for not choosing an appropriate game for a newbie and killing her interest.

"Hahaha! It, it wasn't fun? I'm sorry!"

"..."

The magical girl who had brought the game console hurriedly tried to suggest playing a different game. But the silver-haired girl who was staring intently at the game console screen just spoke bluntly.

"Swordsmanship."

"Huh?"

"I want to proceed with this boss using only swordsmanship. Is there no way?"

A boss that would normally be defeated with long-range magic obtained early on.

She was trying to challenge that boss with a physical concept play.

"Aaaaaaah!!!"

In the end, even the gaming magical girl let out an intense moan and collapsed.

Amidst the magical girls who kept recommending the next hobby with exaggerated reactions, the Divine Maiden just sighed.

"Whew."

Inwardly, the Divine Maiden thought it was fun to try various things.

But the Divine Maiden had no idea why the Successor was making her do various activities like this. She was just trying things according to orders for now, but even the order itself was extremely vague.

-*Until you find something you like.*

What does it mean to like something, and when exactly is it supposed to be found?

It would be clearer to give a time limit like until all the trial demons are defeated.

"..."

With a vague feeling, the Divine Maiden slowly examined the faces of the girls chattering beside her.

Joy, excitement, cheers.

The girls' faces were shining with their own colors as they discussed what to make the Divine Maiden do next.

"Now that we've tried everything, shall we make something delicious?"

"Oh! Good! I'll teach you authentic French home cooking!"

"Huh? What are you talking about! When it comes to cooking, it's definitely Italian!"

Different values, fates, and dreams.

In the girls' hearts, starlight of different colors, big and small, was twinkling.

The brilliant sparkle stretching out towards the future resembled the dream form that the goddess of [Beginning] had shown at the beginning, but the difference was that it branched out in even more directions and moved towards different paths in a changed world after a long time.

"..."

Countless dreams that had bubbled up after endlessly colliding and changing among humans were twinkling in the girls' eyes.

Future.

They were living in expectation of tomorrow.

Why?

Why does the concept of 'dreams' that the Successor had spread have such diverse colors?

Though the Successor was still smaller than the goddess of [Beginning] at her most brilliant period, the nature of the power she possessed wasn't much different. Rather, her struggle to take responsibility for all the trial demons had an overprotective aspect compared to the goddess of [Beginning].

'What is the difference between [Beginning] and [Hope]?'

The Divine Maiden had been analyzing various aspects of the goddess of [Beginning] that she had taken for granted at some point, but she still hadn't realized it herself.

'The difference between the goddess and the Successor.'

The goddess of [Beginning] was complete in herself, but couldn't think about tomorrow.

The Successor was incomplete in herself, but was moving while thinking about tomorrow.

Because of that one difference, the form of dreams that magical girls had became incomparably more diverse and contained many more colors. They were sparkling even more as they encountered various emotions and thoughts in a world the Divine Maiden couldn't even imagine.

Those dreams were so brilliant that she unknowingly came to like them.

Tomorrow.

What is tomorrow for humans?

"Divine Maiden!"

"Hm?"

"Now let's make food together!"

"Let's try everything we can do today!"

"...Alright."

"Yay!"

Magical girls pulling the Divine Maiden, who had been lost in thought with her arms folded, leading her out for the next cultural experience. Though she had been dragged around since morning when the sun started to rise, the things she had enjoyed until now, with the sun high in the sky, could still be counted on two fingers.

'Were dreams of hoping for tomorrow this diverse?'

Things to enjoy that don't end even if you do them all day.

Foods that don't end even if you eat them all day.

The stories contained in them.

Tens of thousands of dreams that didn't exist in the primordial era or Elysion that were thought to be complete.

Countless cultures that numerous people existing on this star liked

and created.

The distant history of countless people who lived crying and laughing while enjoying these cultures.

All of these were contained in that single word 'humanity'.

'Ah.'

Destruction.

It wasn't just a concept that existed in text.

All the precious things that had continued endlessly from the first era and finally came down to those living 'now' disappear. All the worlds that these people who shine so diversely and wait for 'tomorrow' live in and cherish disappear.

Nothingness.

It wasn't something that could be made up for later, but meant a more fundamental deprivation.

To disappear from this world. To die in this world.

It was such a futile thing.

"I see."

Avoiding the curse of the three goddesses, confirming that the Successor rises with the power of [Resurrection].

Handing over what I had if the Successor from another universe had the will to save humanity.

Except for those things, I had ignored everything else.

"So that's why they were angry."

A girl with a red ribbon.

A giant boar running.

The third trial.

The day the Divine Maiden ran away pretending not to see people.

"So that's why the Successor was angry too."

For the first time, the Divine Maiden felt something about what she had done.

* * *

"I'm back."

"You look terrible."

"It was unavoidable if I wanted to try everything once."

"You did well."

In the completely darkened night.

The Divine Maiden who came back to me had all sorts of sauces and crumbs on her mouth, and her sophisticated fashion had become wrinkled and dirty while enjoying all kinds of cultural activities.

The appearance of the girl who had left in front of the lighthouse in the morning now evoked a protective instinct in a different sense.

"Did you find anything new?"

"First."

The Divine Maiden shook her disheveled hair and tidied her clothes. But they were so dirty and wrinkled that they didn't really become neat.

"I'm sorry."

"What?"

"I fundamentally lacked understanding of humanity."

Still expressionless but.

Somehow seeming embarrassed, somehow seeming regretful.

"Humanity was a broader, more numerous, and more diverse concept than I thought."

"And?"

"It wasn't a concept that could be restored just by keeping them in Elysion."

"I see."

"If I had thought more myself, I could have proceeded with the goddess of [Beginning]'s intentions in a different way. But I didn't think. So I ignored them."

The Divine Maiden sincerely said once again.

"I'm sorry. My thinking was insufficient."

"..."

I felt indescribable joy at that answer and said. The person who should receive this apology is not me.

"What do you think about that, Yuki?"

"...Yeah."

A girl with a red ribbon carefully coming out from behind a tree.

The Divine Maiden and Yuki.

They finally faced each other, discarding certain thoughts they had in the previous world.

"I'm sorry."

"Yeah."

"From now on, I'll keep thinking. About the things I need to protect."

"Yeah, I will too."

"I can't make up for it, but I won't do it again from now on."

"Yeah, I'll keep carrying it too."

"Can you help me?"

"Yeah, I'll help you."

Handshake

The girl who had abandoned people and ran away.

The girl who had abandoned the past and ran away.

Shook hands in reconciliation to move forward.

Sharing a resolution that only they could make.

Swoosh—Bang!!

Fireworks were launched from Elysion's square where the evening banquet was still continuing, desperately searching for the birthday girl.

"Divine Maiden!! Where are you!! Let's make Japanese food together too!!"

"Let's eat cake together!!"

I could hear those voices.

"Then, shall we go back now?"

"Thank you, Successor."

"It's nothing. You always work hard."

I gave one more gift to the Divine Maiden.

"Happy birthday. Hecate."

"...Thank you."

Chapter 126 : Darkness

Chaos intertwined with red and black.

Memories of stars.

Wounds of blasphemy created by primordial humanity wishing for death.

In the deep place where the final dragon to remove humanity is still sleeping.

[Plague] and the boar... the demon of the third trial were fighting.

Guuuung—

A fallen giant body.

The third demon that had dominated the chaotic space like a huge mountain range was defeated by the endlessly regenerating and dividing magical girls of [Plague]. The floor of the chaotic space was filled with thousands of fallen magical girls of [Plague].

The third demon to weaken humanity until the final dragon awakens. It completely vanished in a space unknown to humanity for the absorption of starlight for the endlessly multiplying magical girls of [Plague] to live.

"Hehe, hehehehe!!"

"We won!! We finally won!!"

"Now we can live in the wounds of stars for a while!"

"Hahaha..."

"..."

"..."

Futility.

The magical girls of [Plague], who had endlessly absorbed demons just to steal starlight and maintain their existence in the chaotic space, all looked up at the sky. All the magical girls of [Plague], who were still endlessly increasing in number and being born, stood dumbfounded.

They just stared at the sky.

"..."

"..."

No.

There was no such thing as sky there.

The children of stars, humanity, recognized that they were divided into earth and sky by the goddess of [Beginning].

They viewed the world through her, and could distinguish numerous things through her.

Outside the world she had defined, there was only primordial chaos again.

Primordial chaos.

Will of stars.

Wounds of stars.

To beings originating from humanity, that place just felt empty.

No sky

No sea

No wind

No land

No fire

No water

Just flowing mixed in starlight.

Emptiness.

"No."

"This isn't it."

"We... can't live here."

"Even though we were cursed by the three goddesses, even though we hate the first goddess."

"...Still, we wanted to be born!!"

"We can't live in the wounds of stars."

Because the magical girls of [Plague] were endlessly dying or being born anew even now, they couldn't know the world except for very biased information. But at least they could know that this place wasn't a space where they could live peacefully.

Because the girl who should have been their eyes had already disappeared, pushed out by tens of billions of personalities.

There was no fate for the magical girls of [Plague].

The fate of nothingness just existed blankly in the universe of nothingness like that.

"..."

"..."

One girl, in a shabby appearance with black bandages wrapped over her naked body, stretched her hand towards the sky.

"L-liar...! We have to live forever repeating multiplication and extinction in such a shitty place, stealing starlight from demons...?!"

Next to her, a girl with the same appearance stretched her hand towards the sky in the same posture, in despair.

"No!! We can't live like demons!! We wanted to be born in this world!! But we don't want to live forever in a place like this!!"

Under the huge rift where the final dragon sleeps.

"If you split the fate and starlight that one person should have into tens of billions!! There's nothing left!! We have nothing but emptiness!!"

Countless girls with the same face wailed.

"Just give us trials instead!!"

"We'll become the trials!!"

"We'll clean up humanity!!"

"Please don't leave us in such a place...!"

"Please let us out of here...!"

In the curse of eternally repeating multiplication and division with tens of billions of souls.

In the starlight that weakens and sickens others just by existing.

Thousands of magical girls of [Plague] yearn.

To escape from hellishly small bodies and have their own bodies.

To escape from chaos and live as 'humans' in the world.

Rather than protecting humanity, to become humans themselves.

We yearn.

We yearn.

"We'll do anything!!!"

Give us that world.

Guuuung—

The huge will remaining in the wounds of stars allowed it.

It recognized the magical girls of [Plague] as new trials and new humanity.

If they became the third trial and cleaned up the sinful descendants, it allowed them to live on the surface of this star as those subordinate to the will of stars.

It promised to accept the magical girls of [Plague], who could change their distorted fate across rifts, as new starlight.

"Ah..."

Golden starlight poured down on the magical girl of [Plague] right under the huge rift.

An ominous gold that shines brilliantly but contains huge darkness.

Gold older than [Beginning] that distinguished only the beautiful things in chaos.

Darkness and light, life and death, birth and destruction.

Hiss—!!

The golden starlight stuck to the magical girl of [Plague] like mud, bestowing divinity.

From the will of stars that watched everything from a dimension far higher than the three goddesses, countless memories flow in.

The originally determined fate of stars.

Foolish humanity hurting each other with greed.

Foolish goddesses who gave up existence to return to the flow of

stars.

The fate determined for foolish ones.

A destroyed world.

"Hehe... what. It was a world that would have been ruined anyway."

Magical girls attacking each other.

Apostles hiding in their own domains.

Goddesses absorbed by the will of stars.

Hiss—!!

Fates of destruction clearly recorded in the transcendent cosmic records.

She reached out there and pulled thousands of starlights that had fallen asleep after finishing all battles in different timelines.

She pulled thousands of fates whose souls had disappeared in darkness and only records remained.

"Just this, if I just have this...!"

The magical girl of [Plague] covered in golden starlight sprinkled that starlight on thousands of herself endlessly multiplying behind her. She handed it over to the [Plague] who were destined to perish futilely without having their own starlight.

Click—

Click—

Thousands of scales of greed moved and absorbed starlight.

Absorbing starlight recorded in the history of destruction that had existed sometime, they absorbed even the fates they had advanced towards and their distorted dreams.

Crunch crunch

The appearances of all girls except the [Plague] standing at the very front change due to starlight.

They change, dyeing numerous colors into darkness.

Though it was an alien and eerie appearance to anyone, it was the only appearance allowed to [Plague].

We yearn.

Even if it's an abandoned fate, we yearn.

[Lightning]

[Navigation]

[Freedom]

[Protection]

[Machine Gun]

"Justice... it's fleeting and futile. That's why it's noble."

"There's no place for humans on the vast sea."

"There's no freedom in this world. That's why we take revenge on those who took freedom away."

"Everything I protected was an illusion. Just floundering in delusions of the past."

"It wasn't a toy I was holding waiting for family. This is a weapon that kills people."

The girls who had changed before they knew it muttered quietly.

While absorbing fates that have now become lies.

They changed by putting on false selves themselves.

They remembered by recalling vanished history themselves.

They imitated by picking up fake memories of girls who had already died.

"We are fakes."

"Even so."

"We yearn."

What we wanted wasn't destruction.

What we wanted wasn't nothingness.

"Ah, that's right. We are not nothingness or destruction...! We are beings who yearn for and plunder all fates! We are the plague of greed!!"

The magical girl of [Plague] covered in golden starlight was now wearing a dress engraved with darkness imitating the sky of doomed fate, not shabby bandages. She was stretching out her hand, scattering golden darkness in front of the magical girls of [Plague] imitating magical girls who had died in destruction.

Four black stars.

Surging divinity.

"We are darkness."

Darkness that seems like it will swallow the world.

As [Greed], not futile [Plague].

We imitate by plundering fates that were sleeping in destroyed time.

We are [Plague] and [Greed].

Because we couldn't have anything, we imitate and plunder everything.

Fully Bloomed 4-star Magical Girl of [Greed]

Erebos

"I'll plunder everything - fate, world, dreams, time."

O humans living in the age of greed.

O goddesses who cursed us.

O all who reject predetermined fate.

This shall be the great rebellion of an abandoned shabby fate.

Only the wounds of stars embraced us.

[Greed] shouted in front of the magical girls who had accepted false fates.

"Let's absorb what [Beginning], who irresponsibly gave birth to us, left behind!"

"Let's usurp the three goddesses who left us only endless deception and curses!"

"Let's plunder this world for us, who endlessly divide, to live!"

On the day the third trial opens.

We will challenge them.

To establish a world of the sick who only infect their surroundings without having anything.

Chapter 127 : Fragments of Greed (1)

July 27

I was talking with Dorim at the Elysion Observatory about the anomalies occurring in rifts appearing all over the world.

"We keep getting reports that magical girls approaching rifts are rapidly consuming starlight."

"Have magical girls of [Plague] been spotted?"

"No, only ordinary demons come out of the rifts, and as always, they close after clearing out a certain number of demons."

"...Then is it possible they're constantly watching from beyond the rift?"

Dorim thought for a moment and then shook her head.

"I can't say for sure either. You said even you and Hecate don't know what's beyond the rifts."

Feeling something about the continuing anomalies, Dorim kept deploying silver observation ships through the cyberbrain world that could observe beyond the rifts. Of course, to prevent the rifts from closing, Ichika, who had the best combat ability, was gathering the demons pouring out during that time.

-Uwaa! The demons keep coming out, how long do I have to do this!

-Just hold on a bit longer! Ichika! Just 19 more to put in!!

-How many have we put in so far?

-5!

-Argh!!

Thanks to Ichika's hard work, they were able to insert all 24 observation ships they had prepared into the rift, but.

"Always at some point, they get enveloped in red, black, and golden energy and become invisible."

"It seems like the will of the stars is interfering."

"The will of the stars... you mean the three goddesses who are interfering with us want to return?"

"Yeah, because the wounds of stars are a place even the three goddesses can't properly reach. The three goddesses probably can't interfere there."

All goddesses except the goddess of [Beginning] were born from a mixture of the will of stars and the will of humanity.

Because they are completely bound to the throne of nothingness by the will of humanity that rejects the age of gods, they try to destroy humanity in order to return to freedom themselves and return to the flow of stars.

"So you mean we should see it as [Plague] also completing some kind of contract and being incorporated into the wounds of stars, just like Animus was allowed to be the overseer of trials?"

"Yeah."

"Whew... it's complicated. It's already a headache just keeping the three goddesses in check, and now the will of stars is arbitrarily increasing its affiliates."

In fact, we don't know much about the will of stars.

The distant primordial chaos.

The world of humans living on the surface of this star was what the

goddess of [Beginning] had chosen only beautiful things for the children who followed her. Even the goddess of [Beginning] only called the true flow of stars hidden in a deep dimension inside this world chaos.

'Even if it's a fragment left by the first goddess, does it accept it as long as it can reduce humanity with malice spewing from the wounds left by the first humans?'

The malice emitted by the wounds of stars.

The daughter of stars and goddess of [Beginning].

An attitude of accepting anything as long as it meets the purpose of reducing humanity, even if it comes from two opposing beings with completely different attitudes towards humanity.

'Somehow... it feels like a mechanical and transcendent divine being different from the goddesses.'

I felt a sense of dissonance at the sight of the wounds of stars accepting an apostle born to protect humanity without any problem while being hostile to humanity.

"..."

"..."

Just that.

There was nothing more we could know.

To lighten the heavy atmosphere, I hurriedly brought up a different topic.

"Oh right, how's the situation in Korea these days?"

"Hm? Well... everyone's living well."

Dorim seemed to guess my intentions and smiled slightly, but showed her desire to set aside the headache-inducing problem for a moment.

"The White Wing Unit is always finding spare time as usual... oh, I heard Hong Nayeon has been participating in training more enthusiastically lately."

"Lieutenant Hong?"

"Yeah. I heard she played an active role when fighting the sea serpent last time, and since then she's become completely confident in using her ability and is actively training while simulating Busan."

"Hmm, that's confidence, but..."

It seems like she just wants to become the guardian of Busan because she doesn't want to go abroad.

"And besides that... civilians are disappointed that the Olympics were canceled?"

"Ah."

"I guess public opinion to cancel definitely increased since a giant sea serpent was going to rampage right in front of the country where it was originally supposed to be held."

Come to think of it, 2012 was the year the Olympics were held.

Since the beginning of this year, there have been nuclear wars, human extinction, and all sorts of things to run around frantically, so I had completely forgotten about topics related to the world outside Elysion.

'Although it's a bit different from the history I know, those athletes I knew weren't there.'

After all, while the major history is similar to the Earth I originally lived on, there are slight differences in numerous events existing within it. I've been disappointed more than once or twice after actually finding something.

Even so, I felt regret about having to cancel such a large event as the Olympics.

'But well, even on the Earth I lived on, the Olympics are canceled... postponed once.'

Actually, since there was no one around me who was very interested in sports competitions, I didn't remember feeling particularly regretful even in the previous world. Come to think of it, it didn't seem like something to regret that much.

"I see."

"That's right."

Dorim and I nodded nonchalantly.

"Dorim, and about what I said before."

"Ah, alias change? It still doesn't work for me."

"I see."

Change of alias.

Another alias given to magical girls who transcend the fate inherent in the glass star.

I tried it with the fully bloomed 3-star magical girls by subtly telling them their fates, but...

-It doesn't seem to work.

-I'm sorry, but I can't seem to understand it.

Dorim and Himari tried for hours but failed without even getting a sense of it. The hours of them looking at me with doubtful eyes as if questioning whether such a thing even existed in the first place made me feel somewhat guilty.

-Whoa?! I'm now the magical girl of [Friendship]! I'm excited! ...But what changed, Hikari-chan?

-Oh, [Trust]. But what is this?

-[Responsibility]... Hmm. I don't know what exactly changed. It just feels

like calling by surname and first name.

Hana, Ichika, and Sumire succeeded so easily and anticlimactically. They said it felt like finding one more candy they had forgotten to eat in their coat pocket.

'But nothing really changed.'

What exactly is this difference?

What exactly was that dramatic change that Animus, Yuki, and I achieved?

"Whew."

Except for the fully bloomed 4-star involving divinity, the alias change, which might be the last hurdle for magical girls, was as shrouded in mystery as the fourth star.

'Even if we figure out this difference, it might not change much like with Sumire, Ichika, and Hana.'

While we're advancing through all trials without any sacrifices like now, it would be good if we could increase our means to respond to the will of stars showing increasingly strange movements.

"Then let's end today's meeting here."

"Okay, I'll go back to Korea now."

"Alright, say hi to Team Leader Oh and President Yang for me. Especially tell President Yang to stop coming here."

"Ah? Yang bastard? Okay."

Dorim happily talked about President Yang's lame duck period and all sorts of scandals being revealed, now calling him completely like a subordinate, before returning to Korea.

'Should I ask Hecate about the rifts again?'

I left the Elysion conference room and crossed the square, which had

heated up due to the summer sun, and went up to the lighthouse located in the center of the city, knocking on the door of the top floor.

Knock knock

"Hecate, I have something to say."

"No... I don't want to."

Knock knock

"Hecate, I have something to say."

"P-please go away."

Knock knock

"Hecate."

"I won't do it."

Knock knock

"Hey."

"..."

"Open up."

Creak

The shabby wooden door opened and Hecate, wrapped in a white blanket, looked at me with suspicious eyes. She quietly spoke while holding a grape juice pack in one hand and a portable game console in the other.

"Successor. Didn't you say you would guarantee rest time?"

"I really just have something to say."

"I heard from Yuki that conversations with superiors are included in a type of work consultation."

"Yuki doesn't know because she hasn't experienced social life."

"By that logic, you haven't experienced social life either."

"Who was collecting rent every month without fail?!"

When I slightly raised my fist, Hecate flinched and clutched her blanket.

"It was unavoidable to hide the Successor to prevent interference with the movement of stars."

"...Anyway, I'll really just talk for a moment, so open up."

Creak

"Wow, you really can't clean up."

A completely messy room.

All kinds of game consoles, printed papers with game guides, and grape juice packs were scattered everywhere on the floor. While Dorim had also made quite a mess, at least she pretended to throw things away, unlike Hecate who was truly coexisting with trash.

"You seem to have liked the games in the meantime?"

"Hmm, they were fun."

Beep

Seeming to accept that I was about to start a serious conversation, Hecate paused the game console and plugged it into a charger connected to the generator.

Hecate sat on the blanket spread on the floor.

"So what's the matter?"

"Tell me everything you know about the wounds of stars and rifts."

Chapter 128 : Fragments of Greed (2)

The wounds of stars.

A blasphemous wound created by the first humans to distort the perfect flow of stars and create the concept of 'death'. And the pus of stars coming from there appears in the form of demons to remove the sinful descendants who wounded the star from the surface.

The purpose of demons is to destroy humanity.

"That's all I know. The goddess of [Beginning] didn't have enough capacity to leave me much information while arranging the Successor and messenger."

"..."

"And if things had gone according to the original plan, there would have been no need to know more than this. However..."

"However?"

"The goddess of [Beginning] was the only goddess among all goddesses who witnessed the complete will of the unwounded star. Perhaps the reason she volunteered for the ritual of trials lies there."

The purpose held by the will of stars.

I didn't think it was entirely the destruction of humanity.

The reason why the goddess of [Beginning] specifically said that humanity must 'evolve' to survive.

The reason she said only an extremely small number of people who 'evolved' to avoid the curse of the three goddesses could survive.

Originally, the plan to have only a minimum number of humans escape to Elysion also included 'evolved' humans led by the Successor.

'To evolve means to change.'

Deviating from the flow that came down from the first humans by receiving starlight from fragments of the goddess of [Beginning].

The reason for becoming independent from that flow originating from the will of stars and continuing from ancient times until now.

In the previous world that quickly perished due to the curse of the three goddesses, it was unknown. But from the current perspective where the form of trials has been reversed and magical girls have been incorporated into trials, there is a sense of dissonance.

'If the star really hated humanity and wanted to destroy it, it would have rejected the incorporation of magical girls.'

It seemed that the will of stars was not blindly hostile to humanity, but was trying to destroy 'current' humanity as a result due to some necessity.

'If it's evolved humans... it would be magical girls. The people to be evacuated to Elysion would also be people connected to magical girls.'

People following magical girls in Elysion can be self-sufficient by exchanging dreams. They don't have to live consuming things born and grown from stars.

Separation of stars and humans.

The goddess of [Beginning] had to separate stars and humans.

Suddenly, the magical girls of [Plague] came to mind.

Greed.

Plunder.

Division.

Magical girls with a constitution that had no choice but to plunder others' starlight to maintain themselves.

Without any hostility towards others, but naturally causing harm for their own survival.

'...It's similar.'

The relationship between stars and humans.

The relationship between humans and stars.

Not because they were hostile to each other, but just hurting each other out of necessity.

If the purpose held by the will of stars is not simply massacre out of resentment. If the will of stars is trying to destroy humans to seal its own flaws like the magical girls of [Plague].

"The will of stars... is not simply killing people. Perhaps it's trying to gather the faint fragments scattered from the first humans and return to a complete flow?"

"I can't deny that. Even the three goddesses abandoned by humans originated from stars. They instinctively wanted to return to the flow of stars, into chaos."

"The will of stars endlessly pursues and absorbs humanity that consumes things born and grown from stars. That's why it couldn't pursue humanity following magical girls who can be self-sufficient with their own starlight."

"That's a fresh idea... similar to the original plan of the goddess of [Beginning]."

The first humans who fell from the stars in the very distant past.

If it's bringing down trial demons to reabsorb the starlight latent in their descendants.

The trials were not something brought down out of hatred for humans from the beginning, but simply actions to seal wounds.

The destruction of humanity is not the purpose but the result. That's why it shows a mechanical appearance like now, not a massacre with hostility.

It's just that in the previous world, it was accelerated by the curse of the three goddesses who were hostile to humanity.

The relationship between stars and humans.

Hecate and I completed a new hypothesis while exchanging words.

"What do you think of my idea?"

"Hmm. I can neither deny nor affirm it. The number of grounds is meager, but they're grounds that can't be ignored..."

"In times like this, you're supposed to just agree."

"Hmm. The Successor's thoughts seem correct. The Successor is very smart."

Clap clap clap

It was very impressive to see Hecate, who would have never agreed until she was convinced even if she obeyed, appropriately agreeing to match the atmosphere.

The appearance of becoming human very quickly after starting to interact with other magical girls.

"Well done."

"Thank you."

"..."

"..."

Although I jokingly ended the conversation with Hecate.

'There really is a lack of evidence.'

As we shared new thoughts about the wounds of stars, we ran out of topics to discuss. It was just reasonable speculation based on newly discovered aspects in this world.

'Too many things have changed in the changed world, and because of me.'

After that, I talked with Hecate about the purpose of the goddess of [Beginning] and the final dragon, but there wasn't much gain.

If only there was a means for humanity to coexist with the will of stars more perfectly, without wounds.

"Um, excuse me."

"Yes?"

Hecate had been restless since the conversation was somewhat over. There was urgency in her eyes, which had been glancing out the window for a while.

'Hm? It's just an ordinary sunset.'

The conversation that had started from midday had continued until sunset was beginning. The sound of preparing dinner was faintly echoing from the square restaurant.

-Kids! The ingredient prep is done!

-Bring three more batches of potatoes.

-Oh my, I feel bad just eating this, is there anything I can help with?

-Haha, it's okay! Mister.

Sounds of daily life.

Sounds of Hecate groaning.

"...Haah."

Hecate seemed to think she couldn't take it anymore and started speaking in a desperate voice.

"If the talk is over... I want to... play games..."

"Games?"

Nod nod

A vigorous nod of agreement leaving a silver afterimage due to her silver hair.

If Hecate were to be sent out to a rock concert like this, she seemed like she could perform the role of an excellent guest.

I never dreamed that this girl would come to love games so much.

Rather, I thought she would look down on modern culture and have very analog and refined hobbies.

"..."

Fidget

Fidget

Perhaps due to the physique of a born 3-star magical girl, even her fidgeting hands moved violently like tap dancing. I had heard rumors that with those finger skills, she was conquering numerous games in record time and interacting with many game-loving magical girls.

'Is the subtly timid speech pattern also due to that influence?'

A meeting of introverted girls with introverted girls.

Come to think of it, Hecate had always shown an introverted appearance, disliking crowded places.

'It wasn't noticeable because her speech was solemn and she only interacted with golden girls.'

Perhaps these appearances are Hecate's new self that she's creating as she finds things she likes.

Even if it seems very disconnected from her past appearance of mechanically carrying out missions, it might not be a completely different aspect.

"Alright. But you have to go on a business trip to America early tomorrow morning, so do it in moderation."

"Ah, understood...! I'll only play until 4... 3 AM...!"

Hurriedly

Hecate, who urgently disconnected the game console from the charger to the point where her solemn speech pattern as the magical girl of [Revelation] mixed with the timid speech pattern of an introverted girl, dived onto the white blanket.

Rustle

Rustle

After creating a nest by gathering scattered blankets around with her slender arms and silver-white starlight, Hecate, who had established a powerful gaming domain that even the three goddesses couldn't invade, fell silent.

Leaving Hecate on the top floor of the lighthouse, I walked around the square watching magical girls preparing dinner and ordinary people living in Elysion, pondering ways for stars and humans to coexist.

"Oh? Your Majesty! Aren't you coming to eat?"

"I'll come a bit later. I just want to walk for a while now."

"Miss Shirogane! A new collection has come out, would you like to take a look?"

"I'll take a look after dinner."

"I'm thinking of doing a simple broadcast tonight, would you like to participate?"

"I'll just come to watch."

"Hahaha! It would be an honor if you come!"

People spoke to me.

The evening scenery of Elysion, which the goddess of [Beginning] tried to provide as a final refuge for humans, was peaceful and warm. But I felt greedy to share this scene with more people.

The relationship between stars and humans.

Is this really a fight that ends when all demons are defeated?

Is this really a fight that must continue until both sides are completely silent?

Is there no way to resolve the deep rift... the wounds of stars that have formed in between?

I walked while thinking such thoughts.

Chapter 129 : Fragments of Greed (3)

July 29

A small rift rose in the sky, writhing with red and black magic power. As usual, black lion demons and snake demons were falling to the ground from there.

Like a shower falling under black storm clouds, magical girls were dispatched to clear the demons pouring down to invade the space where humans live.

"■■■■!!"

The now familiar terrible howls of demons.

"Go!! Go!!"

"Let's depart!!"

Magical girls flying through the sky, scattering their respective starlight colors after descending from silver ships.

Girls emitting brilliant light were descending and moving on the land dyed with ominous light.

"Chloe!! I'll guide them that way!"

"Okay! Leave it to me!"

Chloe, the awakened 2-star magical girl of [Penetration], confidently displayed her combat skills honed through numerous battle experiences, and advanced towards the demons gathered by magical girls who volunteered as beaters.

"Haah!!"

A shout of fighting spirit.

Burning starlight.

The emerald-colored starlight flowing into the tip of her thin rapier never betrayed her.

Flash—!

Chloe's dazzling blonde hair shot towards the demons, drawing a straight line with the advancing starlight.

The magical girl of [Penetration], a knight who stakes everything on a single strike that penetrates and pierces through the target.

Swoosh—!!

"■■■■—!!"

"■■■■—!!"

The blonde female knight's attack didn't end with a single charge, but continued advancing, aiming for the weak points of numerous demons.

"■■■■—!!"

"■■■■—!!"

At the end of each swing, one demon inevitably disappears with an unclean death cry.

No demon could stop the blonde female knight's charge among hundreds of demons.

"So many have crawled out! Disappear!"

"■■■■—!!"

Another demon disappeared. With that one as the end, judging they could no longer win against them, the demons scattered and were

hurriedly trying to escape, hiding their bodies under the rocky valley.

[Demons are scattering below the valley. I'll send you the current pursuit situation via video.]

"Okay. Check if there are any escaping to residential areas."

[Understood. This operator will notify you immediately if an emergency situation occurs.]

"Thank you!"

As soon as the radio ended, Chloe elegantly flipped her long hair back once, and looked at the demons hurriedly escaping with their backs turned. And her tremendous footsteps, faster than track athletes despite being in light infantry armor, chased after the shadows of the demons.

Tap tap tap

"Where are you escaping to!"

"Let's completely surround them with a fire net!"

"No! Just tie up the demons' feet from opposite me! If we surround them clumsily, we'll lose them all!"

"Got it, Chloe!"

They deployed magic according to the words of their friend most accustomed to fighting among them.

Boooom!!

Colorful magic pouring down on demons trying to scatter around.

Following the orders of the observation ship watching the operation situation from above and the instructions of squad leader Chloe, the beater magical girls deployed unique skills that could attack a wider range than Chloe, though with less destructive power, to tie up the demons.

Boooom!!

The ground overturned along with a brilliant explosion of starlight.

The demons, with their escape routes blocked, momentarily hesitated and stopped in place.

"■■■?!"

The emerald-colored rapier rushed at the hesitating demons, and the demons, confused by attacks from both sides, moved around erratically before being gradually cleared.

Demons gradually decreased. Magical girls were certain of victory.

There, the magical girls except Chloe were feeling elation on the battlefield they had stepped onto for the first time.

"Good, it's going very well...!"

[No demons have left the scene! Please annihilate them as is!]

"Got it!"

In the vanished history where humanity failed to realize the power of starlight, they were just toyed with by demons, but in the world where magical girls are active now, demons were just dew melting under a single ray of starlight.

Chloe quietly watched the situation among the demons who had completely disappeared like ice melting under sunlight.

'Just like friendly matches between magical girls, battles always change to the next phase when they seem to be over...'

Her intuition, honed through numerous friendly matches, training, and actual combat, was still sharp.

[The demons have completely fallen silent. Good work.]

"Whew! This job was tough too... my starlight is running low and I want to rest."

"Why don't you just go straight to Elysion through the Threads of Fate and rest for a night?"

"No... even if I'm late due to standby, I want to go home by warp and shower."

Along with the operator magical girl's voice announcing the end of the situation, chatty conversation continued. But Chloe was still quietly watching the situation with her rapier slightly lowered.

"Hm? What are you doing, Chloe?"

"Just a moment."

"Ah, okay..."

If nothing happens after 5 minutes, Chloe will truly let go of her final tension.

"..."

Her magical girl friends who had died by Scavenger and woken up months later teased Chloe for being overly sensitive, but Chloe, who had experienced more fights than anyone among magical girls, was convinced this was the right mindset to have on the battlefield.

'I can't let my friends and comrades die anymore.'

Eventually, Chloe discovered an anomaly.

"Everyone, don't let your guard down."

"Hm? Wh-what's wrong?"

"The rift is strange."

"Huh? It still hasn't closed?"

"..."

The dark red rift floating in the sky still hadn't closed.

The rift that always disappeared like mist when all demons were

cleared, but even now after defeating all demons, it was clearly not hiding its ominous appearance in the sky.

"Can you see it, Observatory?"

[...It's an anomaly. Even after searching several times with magic and help from Elysion Observatory, it shows that all demons in the area have been cleared.]

Twang!!

A flash of dull light came towards Chloe from inside the rift.

"Attack!! It's a demon attack!! Everyone mustn't let their guard down!!"

Chloe shouted at almost instinctive speed at the anomaly that occurred and fought against the approaching flash. The flash of dull light charged towards Chloe at tremendous speed.

Swoosh—

Clang—!

As Chloe didn't lower her guard and blocked the attack with her rapier, the light attack stopped with a clear sound.

"Th-this!?"

Chloe, who was blocking the enemy's attack while wrapped in brilliant emerald starlight, couldn't believe it.

[Give it... back!]

What was scattering dull emerald-colored starlight on the opposite side of the rapier she was blocking with was herself. 'Chloe', with a face as pale as a corpse and black energy shining like blood vessels, muttered with dull and empty eyes.

[Friends... comrades...!]

"M-me?!"

[I... I want to... go back too...!]

"Kugh!"

Though startled by the enemy's appearance and hesitating for a moment, the other self that jumped out of the rift was very weak.

To be precise, at the level of just awakening from born 1-star.

But the sticky killing intent she emitted overwhelmed the current Chloe.

An aspect not of a magical girl but just a butcher.

An atmosphere somehow reminiscent of Scavenger.

'Scavenger...!!!'

Feeling that, Chloe shouted with rising nausea and disgust.

"Get lost!! Don't think about touching my friends!!"

[Give it back...!! Your place...!]

Clang!

After clashing blades once more, the one who fell was the other Chloe. She couldn't respond to the awakened 2-star magical girl's attack and fell helplessly with her chest pierced.

[Next... time... surely.]

"..."

"Wh-what is this."

The other 'Chloe' who suddenly appeared and attacked Chloe left a futile death cry and disappeared, leaving dull emerald-colored starlight. Finally, no hostile presence remained at the scene, and the rift quietly disappeared like mist.

"..."

"..."

But only a chilling silence filled the scene.

* * *

[Ho-home... I want to go home!!]

"Hmm."

Rattle rattle

Lee Minseul, the awakened 2-star magical girl of [Shooting], calmly observed 'another self' grasping her rifle. Pale face, black blood vessels, and a magical girl outfit completely torn and worn out.

In a situation where two girls with identical faces were facing each other, the 1st platoon of the White Wing Unit forgot their usual strict military discipline and was shocked.

"Platoon leader?!"

"Shh. Quiet."

Let's hear what she's babbling about.

Minseul was thinking this while not immediately subduing her other self.

'She's weak. She'd lose even fighting last year's me.'

A clumsy use of starlight that could be believed to be a magical girl who had just awakened her power now. But the killing intent in her eyes was similar to that of a butcher who had killed several people.

More precisely, like Alex, the magical girl of [Bombing].

In a word, it was unpleasant.

"Tch."

[Mom...! Dad...! Aah...!! Saebyeok!! Don't go to America!! I want to go back...!!]

"Why are you looking for our mom and dad. Get lost, you crazy bitch."

[Give it back!! I'm going back!!]

Crack!

The other Minseul broke the rifle with telekinesis, then took out a pistol from the holster under her skirt and aimed it, and as soon as Minseul saw that, she took out a magazine from the tactical pouch on her chest and threw it.

Ting!

While the pale Minseul momentarily hesitated, surprised by the thrown object to her head, Minseul rushed in, kicked her legs, grabbed one arm and completely twisted it.

Crack

With an eerie sound, white arm bone protruding outside the skin.

"Did you receive training completely like shit, you really can't fight worth a damn."

[Kugh?!]

"Where did you come from."

[Let go!! I'm going back!!]

"..."

The other Minseul resisted while floundering emitting sticky killing intent.

Minseul was silent for a moment, then took out the bayonet she had kept in her tactical pouch and stabbed it into the other self's back.

Stab—!

[Ah... aaah...!!]

"..."

A clumsy appearance completely unprepared for pain.

A White Wing Unit member, not a new recruit, wouldn't lose their mind and collapse from just this much attack.

A clumsy combat attitude that would only be shown before meeting Hikari, the magical girl of [Beginning]... [Hope] last year.

Everything was clumsy, but only the killing intent was real.

"Hmm."

[Ne-next time...]

"Oh, can you come again?"

[...]

"Say more."

Silence

Minseul ended the fake's life as she fell silent, and the other self disappeared leaving only black fragments.

Beep

Minseul turned on the radio and contacted Park Saebyeok.

"This is 1st Platoon leader. I have an urgent report."

Chapter 130 : Fragments of Greed (4)

Attacks by magical girls with identical faces.

This eyewitness news, reported while clearing small rifts that occurred in Europe, China, and Korea, was conveyed to the Grand Council through representatives of the European Union, Bright Moon, and White Wing Unit respectively.

Chloe, the magical girl of [Penetration].

Li Na, the magical girl of [Memorization].

Lee Minseul, the magical girl of [Shooting].

Combat magical girls who have strengthened to awakened 2-star through numerous person-to-person battles and real combat since last winter.

It was a report that they were attacked by someone with an identical face to themselves, who had shown excellent combat sense that was hard to distinguish even compared to born 2-star magical girls.

'The observatory said it was similar to the energy of demons, not magical girls...'

As soon as I heard the news, I was sitting with Li Na, who had come to report this fact last, listening to the details.

"But it's strange."

"In what way?"

Li Na seemed to be recalling her memories while constantly twirling one side of her twin tails with her hand. Her face as she recalled the

memory was unpleasant.

'Subduing an unidentified opponent with the same face as herself must have been an unpleasant memory for her too.'

Li Na, who organized her vague discomfort into words while recalling it, continued talking slowly.

"As soon as she saw me, she went wild saying she was going to her mom, and mentioned things like where our house is or the clothing store my mom runs. I wondered if she was really another me, but."

As I listened to those words, I felt my hands and feet growing cold at the thought that perhaps demons were imitating magical girls and even reading their minds.

"Among the things that one said. She kept muttering things I don't really know about, like being deceived by the country, being deceived and sent to America as soon as demons came, and that America she arrived at was even more hellish... something like that?"

"What? America? Why America all of a sudden?"

America is currently a problem-free land guarded alternately by Hecate, the Free Magical Girl Alliance, and Elysion's golden magical girls.

"I don't know. And that one was incredibly strange. While making mistakes that a complete novice who just came out to a friendly match would make, it was chilling how she had no hesitation in trying to kill people."

As I listened to Li Na's words, I recalled magical girls with familiar appearances I had seen somewhere, and a certain world.

Magical girls not adept at handling starlight.

China helplessly defeated by demons.

Accustomed to killing people.

That world was the original world of <Magical Girl HAZARD>.

"...No way."

"Hm? Do you know something?"

"Ah, no. Just in case."

"Okay."

"By any chance, did the other Li Na try to take the glass star?"

"Yes! That's right. I wondered what she was trying to do by taking it. Magical girls benefit much more from helping others and blooming their own dreams anyway."

"..."

"Whew... anyway. It felt a bit creepy. I miss my mom..."

"I see. I'm sorry for keeping you for so long."

"It's okay."

I forced a smile on my face while thanking and seeing off Li Na, and Li Na returned to China through the warp gate.

"..."

I calmed my slightly pounding heart and returned to the conference room. Back in the conference room, representative magical girls from each country were talking with serious faces.

"Just a kind of demon that reads thoughts and imitates appearances... a doppelganger? Isn't it something like that?"

"Hmm, are they aiming for psychological shock by bringing up hometown or family stories in common?"

"Then that would explain why they imitated the magical girls who were in charge of the combat teams."

"That's right. After all, they would have to imitate the strongest and most influential person to cause agitation."

"Rather, they could go in the direction of evoking sympathy by choosing the face of the weakest companion, so we should note precautions in the manual separately."

Dorim, Himari, and Sumire were calmly analyzing without agitation, thoroughly considering the opponent as a demon with indifferent faces. It seemed that they, who were originally rational, thought that unknown opponents called demons could attack in this way.

"Hmm, so they said they had weaker capabilities than the one they imitated?"

"That's right. The platoon members said their use of starlight was clumsy, almost at the level of untrained new recruits."

"What, they're seriously pathetic. Demons that can only do psychological attacks?"

"We can't take them too lightly either. There might be personalities that are vulnerable to such attacks."

"Well, their methods are a bit dirty."

Ichika was purely asking Park Saebyeok out of curiosity, and Park Saebyeok was explaining calmly but firmly.

Among the magical girls talking about the opponent mainly in terms of strategy and combat.

Li Meilin looked at me with a heavy expression.

"There's something... that bothers me."

"..."

When Li Meilin, who usually dozed off or slacked during meetings, raised her hand and spoke seriously, everyone focused on her. Li Meilin looked at me with trembling eyes, and I guessed what discomfort she had.

Perhaps I thought I would never have to tell them in my lifetime.

"Among the things the fake magical girl imitating Li Na said... I heard that an operation the Chinese government had planned to do a long time ago was carried out."

"The one about evacuating Chinese and Korean magical girls to America if there's a problem?"

Dorim, who had stopped President Yang from trying to carry out that operation last fall with me, understood what Li Meilin said faster than anyone.

An operation to guarantee the safety of high-ranking government officials and at the same time send magical girls to America to isolate them in a controllable environment in case China and Korea face a crisis. And to quickly incorporate their transcendent healing abilities under the control of the joint US-China-Korea government.

"W-we almost carried it out last year because of the Scavengers. But the fake Li Na said that China was about to be destroyed by demons this year, and they evacuated to America with high-ranking government officials."

"...Come to think of it, Platoon Leader Lee Minseul said something similar."

"Chloe said her other self was desperately looking for her friends."

Park Saebyeok and Laura agreed with Li Meilin's words, and the magical girl representatives gathered in the conference room sensed that these testimonies were coming together and trying to move in some new direction.

"L-looking at those statements, somehow what they're saying seems very different from the facts we know."

"That's right."

"But it's also an assumption that could have happened."

"...That's true."

"And there's information that only they themselves would know."

"..."

Li Meilin presented one possibly terrifying assumption.

Some terrible situation that Li Na, Minseul, and Chloe might have committed without knowing well.

"Maybe... just maybe."

"..."

"It's a really nonsensical imagination, but could the fake magical girls who came out of the rifts be... some kind of... themselves... from a different history...?"

"..."

"...Ah, maybe not. It could have just been random talk."

Killing another self from elsewhere.

In some sense, another method of suicide.

A fact that could be shocking to magical girls who had already subdued fake magical girls for the safety of other magical girls and the removal of rifts. As that expectation came to mind and a suffocating silence was gradually falling over the conference room, a voice was heard.

"That probably isn't the case."

"Hecate?"

Hecate, who had finished her outside work and entered the conference room at some point, quietly sat down next to me and continued speaking.

"Even if they came from that history, I'm certain they are not themselves."

"Why?"

"..."

Hecate looked at me, sending a gaze seeking agreement.

Should we tell them the story of the already destroyed world?

Should we explain that I am protecting this world by twisting the original history to save them?

Such questions were contained in Hecate's faintly glowing red eyes.

'Looking at it this way, we might look like sisters.'

Similar red eyes to mine.

The original Hecate would have unilaterally informed the facts without even asking me, but warmth began to fill the eyes of Hecate, who was learning how to communicate while interacting with numerous people.

Warm red. Those eyes were now becoming similar to mine.

"..."

And the magical girls gathered here were also firmly moving forward with solid beliefs built through their own thoughts, experiences, and trust.

They were no longer fragile girls I had to protect unilaterally.

Equal comrades to me.

"This world has already been destroyed once."

"Destroyed? Is this a story from the past? Related to the goddess of [Beginning]..."

I shook my head at Sumire's words.

"The time of this world has already been reversed once, and I know the original history of this world that was destroyed. I am a foreign substance that did not exist in that history."

"Time was reversed? You mean we've already gone back to the past once...?!"

"Yes, that's why I've known the time of destruction in advance and led magical girls through dreams until now."

"The time of destruction... you're talking about a history different from now?"

"Yes."

I talked about the past history that I thought I might never need to tell them.

"Everyone from there... magical girls in that other history, except for you and the apostles, all died."

Chapter 131 : What If

A certain novel that a boy happened to find in a used bookstore during his middle school years.

The tears of the girl drawn on the cover of that novel looked so pitiful that the boy picked up and purchased the novel being sold in a bundle at the used bookstore.

The novel he finally got to read.

From the moment he turned the first page, the boy couldn't hide his bewilderment.

"What kind of story is this."

A fate of destruction that came without any precursor.

A world ruined by human greed from the beginning.

Fujimoto's magical girl research facility.

The rebellion of abused and sacrificed magical girls.

The relationship between magical girls and ordinary people broken to the point where coexistence is difficult.

＜Magical Girl HAZARD＞

The three goddesses overseeing the game led humanity further down the path of destruction by exploiting information imbalance and unreasonable curses. In this endlessly desolate and unreasonable world, there was no hope or growth to be found to move forward.

Nations being one-sidedly massacred by demons.

Magical girls using ordinary people who distrusted and suspected

them.

The realm of humans gradually shrinking no matter how much they struggled.

Trials that could only be defeated at the cost of magical girls' lives.

A desolate and precarious world that anyone could see was bound to break down.

A cold story that seemed to sneer at magical girls who could no longer produce their own starlight, saying 'That's the limit of humans.'

A tragedy for the sake of tragedy.

A tragedy where everything was destined to rush towards destruction from the very beginning.

A cynical view that considers dreams and hope to be things only naive children believe in.

The heart contained in this story was too nihilistic.

The protagonist Yuki's efforts were always laughed at.

The girl who shouted hope and love that should originally warm people's hearts was an object of ridicule and mockery throughout the story. A trash can for the author's gloomy and disgusting emotions and a show of misfortune displayed to readers.

-No matter how hard you try, nothing changes.

-Are you still saying such things?

-Face reality.

People in the midst of destruction who took looting and murder for granted due to a suddenly arrived fate.

-There's no one farming anymore anyway, so the survivors should share what's left.

-We have to obey to escape from the demons... we have to accept that a few people die as scapegoats.

-Neither soldiers nor police, no one can protect us.

-Please spare me!

-If I had known this would happen, I wouldn't have...!

When the first trial, the lion of darkness, descended on Japan, the apostle of [War] came down to the land with the most magical girls and ordered them to fight and kill each other.

The land where the most magical girls lived turned into a place where the most frenzied battles took place.

When the second trial, the venomous sea serpent, descended on the European coast, they realized for the first time that human weapons were ineffective against demons.

The sea was completely polluted by the poison of the sea serpent that had churned the sea for a very long time, and Europe turned into a cold land of death.

When the third trial, the steel boar, attacked Russia and China, magical girls intoxicated with plunder used starlight to show off their power and dominate people.

Countries collapsed, and the remaining people either lived in hiding while protecting miserable villages, or accepted a new order while submitting to magical girls.

When the fourth trial, horses that eat human flesh, and the fifth trial, birds that spread plague, passed.

Only a very small number of magical girls remained.

A world of humans with barely any dust left.

What appeared before the magical girls who rose to protect it was the dragon of destruction.

The true trial.

The will of stars flying through the sky, taking away everyone's souls.

Unable to defeat the final dragon in the end, the world that unfolded before Yuki's eyes, who survived with the supernatural ability of [Resurrection], was only darkness.

Dark

Cold

Chilling

A world of darkness where all ordinary humans had died and the apostles were silent.

Despair.

"..."

There were only stairs leading to the empty throne of nothingness that descended over the place where the dragon of destruction had passed after harvesting all souls. As she climbed the stairs stretching up to the distant sky, the protagonist Yuki pondered.

Trudge

Trudge

Her stupid brain couldn't understand any of this at all.

'Where did it go wrong?'

Just half a year.

The invasion of demons that started in the summer of 2012, and the destruction that came with the cold winter.

'Fujimoto? Magical girls? People?'

Something was wrong with this world.

She fled from the tyranny of [War] that descended on Shinjuku.

She cried after confirming her father's death in the burning house.

She heard about the magical girl of [Death] among refugees.

'This can't be happening.'

The domain of [Death] that reached Korea, China, and Russia.

The declaration that those who are not magical girls cannot be revived.

[Bombing] trying to plunder refugees who had fled all the way to Russia.

The sense of duty as the magical girl of [Flame] belatedly realized in the midst of it all.

[Magical girls exist to protect everyone!]

But this world did not listen to the voice of just one girl.

They only fought together when a big demon invaded where they lived, and after the fight, they had no hesitation in looting each other and killing each other.

Even so, Yuki struggled.

She tried to gather people, persuade magical girls, and save lives that were scattering like sand.

As if mocking Yuki's struggles, humanity was futilely annihilated by the final trial.

Destruction.

'Something is wrong with this world.'

The beginning of this story was wrong.

Thud

The stairs that finally came to an end.

Yuki who climbed up to the sky.

"..."

Yuki, who had climbed onto the throne of nothingness, picked up a shining fragment from the floor.

Power of the world.

A fragment of the world created by combining the huge will possessed by the powerful first humans and primordial chaos. From within it, the voices of the three goddesses who had uttered words of curse every time the trial came faintly echoed.

-We can... return... finally... the end of humanity.

-In chaos... all shall become one.

-You foolish fragments left by the first daughter... live a meaningless eternity at the edge of the star.

As soon as Yuki picked it up, she could tell.

This was a fragment of the huge goddess once worshipped by humans.

Though it was only a very small part, this fragment could make herself a goddess for a short time.

"With this, maybe...!"

But no matter how many times she tried, it was impossible.

The shed left behind by the evil gods after disappearing somewhere was too feeble.

It was impossible to revive the ordinary people who had died in vain, or to eliminate the demons that had filled the places where humans once lived.

"..."

A half-god.

One who can only distort the rules of the world slightly, and only watch the empty world.

"It's a lie..."

Yuki sat powerlessly on the throne of nothingness and looked at the Earth that had already been destroyed and emptied.

And she closed her eyes.

This story was destined for this ending from the start.

Endlessly consuming, endlessly dying, endlessly misaligning.

A story written to mock people's struggles in life.

A story of gods who mock ignorant people without telling them their fate.

"This is... wrong."

A story that left only a few lines of harsh criticism on the internet, calling it misfortune porn made to fit the trend by mixing magical girls and tragedy.

When the protagonist girl in the story completely despaired and closed her eyes.

The boy who had been cheering for the girl while reading the story also closed his eyes.

"..."

No.

The boy opened the book again.

[We'll surely become happy!]

[Magical girls exist to protect everyone!]

[I want to protect people!]

-Starlight grows stronger through people's dreams.

'I wish someone had told her...!'

-Humans are truly foolish and weak.

The boy endlessly imagined in his head, going back to the beginning of the lines of people and gods mocking the girl's fierce struggle.

"Something is wrong with this story."

Cheering every time the girl moved forward, refuting the structure of the entire story that had been twisted with all its might to draw the ending of destruction, and thinking about the cause of all tragedies.

What if there were more magical girls left who could defeat the trial demons

What if there was room left for people and magical girls to coexist peacefully

What if they could inform the correct way for magical girls to grow before the magical girl of [War] appeared.

What if they could tell magical girls about dreams earlier than the prologue.

What if.

What if...

Even if he was a child who couldn't accept the ending of the story, even if nothing would change no matter how much he imagined solutions to the already determined story.

"What if it had progressed like this."

The boy read the story over and over again, dreaming of the 'what ifs' of ＜Magical Girl HAZARD＞ more than anyone else.

A habit of reading ＜Magical Girl HAZARD＞ over and over again,

started with a rebellious spirit against the hopeless ending.

It was the boy's timid rebellion against the adult who wrote a story denying hope.

And because of that timid rebellion, the boy couldn't help but love this world.

The boy's habit that began with the despair of the girl in the story.

It approached as two warm hands extended to that girl in the distant future.

Chapter 132 : How to Overcome Greed (1)

"...And so, even I only found out that this world, which I had accepted as a story from another universe, really existed after I died."

"..."

"..."

"In fact, the Successor knowing the future of this world in advance like this... was something even the goddess of [Beginning] hadn't anticipated. Originally, you should have heard everything from Yuki Shikishima, the messenger. But the Successor bloomed and became active in this land earlier than that."

"S-so."

Dorim shook her hands with an expression of utter disbelief. The girl who had been calmly preparing for the next step even after hearing about gods and fate for quite some time finally began to waver after hearing my story.

The possibility that this world might have been an unreasonable story.

The possibility that striving in this world might have been a meaningless act.

'Actually, I was planning to hide it and move on because I expected this kind of reaction.'

I thought the story would be too long, so I appropriately omitted things like my circumstances from my previous life or future goals, and only talked about the original future of this world and how I

came to know about it. But even that seems to have been shocking enough.

Wars between magical girls.

Ordinary people and magical girls.

Demons pouring down.

The destruction of the world.

The fact that the fate of this world had already been determined as a story in some world would have been hard for me to believe as well.

"You just happened to find out? A novel you casually picked up and read at a used bookstore before you died was a prophecy book predicting this world...?!"

"I don't know if it was a coincidence... but at least it was a book I read of my own will."

"This... world was the world in the story, and it was destined to be destroyed soon, and Yuki was the protagonist..."

I could somehow understand why Dorim was so flustered and shaken.

Questions I had also endlessly asked myself since the time I decided to try to return to my original world after being reborn in this world.

The thought that this world itself might be an appendage of the world I had lived in.

The thought that even now might be the flow of some story, and we might be puppets appearing in it.

"Yeah... something was strange, this world was going to be destroyed anyway... fleeting..."

"Dorim."

"Uh, yes...?"

"I don't think this world is fake, or that it's a world subordinate to

where I originally lived, I don't think the people living in this world are characters, and I don't think Yuki is the only center of this world."

"...Okay."

"I... think that I myself might be a foreign substance that flowed in as a result of terrible probability or a miracle, in some flow perhaps even greater than the goddesses."

"Foreign substance...?"

Dorim murmured, seemingly feeling some dissonance in my vocabulary.

'Oh no.'

The attitude of realizing that I myself am not truly a person belonging to this universe seems to have sounded lonely to the people who love me.

"Perhaps to completely change the fate this world was to face, a truly enormous being might have guided me here through a miracle."

"Would that be by some... god other than the goddesses?"

"Well, maybe it could be, or maybe not. It might be that I was led by an enormous being incomparable to the three transcendents who only scatter crude curses and distortions from the sky even now."

"...An enormous being."

"Or maybe I'm just a foreigner who broke through an extremely low probability, like how if millions of monkeys typed on typewriters, one might write a masterpiece."

"..."

"Actually, I didn't tell you because I didn't think this kind of talk was very important. We have already met long ago, changed, and are continuing to change. In fact, even among the remaining trials, I only know very little."

"Even so, it's really an unbelievable... miraculous story."

Sumire was making an expression like she was dreaming while listening to my words.

The guilt that Fujimoto played a large part in the destruction.

Herself who died in vain without gaining true enlightenment in that.

The new tomorrow finally pioneered after defying all fates.

"We were already defying a huge predetermined tragedy and unknowingly pioneering a new fate. It's really... like some mythical story. I'd believe it now even if Hikari-san said she was truly an apostle of god."

"..."

Because I was a small human who couldn't understand the truth of the vast universe at all.

Just as Sumire separated herself from Fujimoto's history and dreamed of a greater cause.

I thought of myself as just a wanderer who appeared with the right abilities at the right time to help them.

Apostle of god.

Great fortune's child.

Successor of the goddess.

These grand and noble concepts don't fit me as a human.

I am just.

"I just happened to have the ability and knowledge to help at a time when I could help this world."

I am just one human.

"It was you who accepted that."

"Unnie seems to have a talent for modestly packaging mythical things."

"Well, we know the leader is an ordinary citizen from living together."

"That's why we follow her, isn't it?"

"Heh... by the way, FLAG. Should we establish it now?"

"Ugh."

"I'm joking, joking."

"...Whew."

FLAG opposing Fujimoto.

Sumire and Ichika.

The two people who had become so misaligned that it was no longer even a joke, then turned around greatly and met again, were now just colleagues.

"By the way, to think Korea had already been destroyed... Yang bastard was incompetent as usual."

"Hmm, maybe when demons invaded uncontrollably, they quickly sent the White Wing Unit or the Supernatural Ability Countermeasure Team that hadn't awakened to America. And it's fresh that Lieutenant Hong has such deep affection for her hometown."

"Ah, that kid is Yeo-po in her household."

Dorim decided to set aside the possibility that this world was a story for now after hearing my words. Saebyeok was appropriately agreeing while observing Dorim's reaction.

Li Meilin.

Laura.

Himari.

All the magical girls gathered here seemed shocked at first, but they sorted out their emotions while looking at their current selves that had completely split from the world that had helplessly succumbed to the fate of destruction.

After sharing their own stories for a while like that, we decided to return to the original topic.

"Then how do the magical girls coming out of the rifts remember the already destroyed history?"

"One of my guesses is..."

I continued speaking while summoning a scale with white starlight.

The dazzlingly shining white scale was small enough to fit on my palm.

Creak...

A scale that begins to absorb surrounding starlight very faintly.

"This is the scale of greed that the magical girls of [Plague] originally possessed. The magical girl of [Plague] was originally an apostle with the authority to plunder starlight from magical girls. I think her being demonized by the curse of the three goddesses in this world is closely related to this incident."

"The magical girl of [Death] said that magical girls' souls are bound during the trials... is that related?"

"Yes, probably. Since the will of stars can interfere transcending space and time, I'm guessing that through some deal with the magical girl of [Plague], it read the fate of destruction and brought starlight engraved with the history of destruction that had been sleeping in it."

"There's no evidence, but circumstantially, that's the only way to explain it."

"In short, when guessed from the prophecy of the magical girl of [Hope] and the experience of the magical girl of [Revelation], they're not actually themselves who lived through the destruction?"

Himari remained silent until all the words were finished, then presented one answer that penetrated the core of all questions.

"That's right."

"Correct."

"I see. Then from now on, we should inform especially magical girls skilled in person-to-person combat through friendly match experience to be chosen as leaders, to unconditionally execute on the spot without being flustered even if magical girls with the same face appear."

"..."

"..."

Everyone in the conference room agreed with those words, and the most important issue of countermeasures against fake magical girls was settled in an instant.

'After all, the fake magical girls are no threat to the current magical girls who have become incomparably stronger.'

But Himari's reaction of accepting all the stories so rationally was a bit surprising.

I knew Himari was a calm and cool type from before, but I didn't expect her to have no reaction at all to a story so impressive that even the responsible Sumire, Dorim, and Saebyeok chatted for a while.

'Well, this is more convenient.'

It's better to make the future more hopeful rather than being obsessed with a fate that has already passed.

While I was thinking that, Himari quietly asked me and Hecate so that only we could hear.

"By any chance."

"Yes?"

"By any chance... how was the relief group?"

"...At least as far as I know, it didn't exist."

"There wasn't one."

"...I see."

In the vanished story, Tsugumi, the magical girl of [Order], led a security corps in connection with the collapsed police organization, but Himari, the magical girl of [Nursing], did not appear.

'Maybe she died in vain even before blooming in the midst of war.'

Himari didn't ask me any more questions after that.

But I could feel a faint sense of relief and pride flowing from her.

Murmur murmur

I slowly looked around the conference room where magical girls were talking about their changed fates.

Dorim and Saebyeok.

Ichika and Sumire.

Li Meilin and Laura.

Himari.

They let go of the shock that this world's fate had already been determined in just the first few minutes.

What they were truly surprised by was my inner thoughts and reasons for trying to help this world.

They showed only concern and gratitude for me.

'That's right.'

We've come too far now to be surprised by such things, and we've grown enough not to be consumed by a past that might have been.

I was proud of that.

Chapter 133 : How to Overcome Greed (2)

August 6

[Notification from Elysion Observatory, evacuation of all civilians from nearby areas has been confirmed.]

"How is the deployment situation at locations where signs of rifts are appearing in each region?"

[Small combat teams led by born or awakened 2-star magical girls have been dispersed and deployed.]

"Understood. Please monitor the situation of the trial rifts, and handle urgent situations occurring in each region through combat team coordination as much as possible."

[Understood. Please return safely.]

Silence fell as the radio transmission from the operator magical girl giving orders while grasping all situations ended from the observatory monitoring all battlefields in Elysion's kaleidoscope.

Southern Siberia in central Russia.

This place, where small puddles of water were gathering in the grassland visible between the green coniferous forests, had a temperature just over 20 degrees Celsius, unlike the sweltering August heat of East Asia.

Though the damp wind from the vegetation filling the view and the sunlight falling overhead without a single shade were a bit unpleasant, I was somewhat relieved as it wasn't as hot as the August heat I had expected.

To guard against the magical girls of [Plague] who absorb starlight, all ordinary magical girls were pushed back. We decided to concentrate firepower in conjunction with magical girls of fully bloomed 3-star or higher who could endure for a long time even in front of [Plague]. So preparations reminiscent of war like in the first and second trials were not necessary.

'As all the magical girls with the best combat power have come here. The defense of other regions must rely on the coordination of all magical girls and the miracles of Elysion, but.'

Kang Dorim, the magical girl of [Cyberbrain] with almost no direct combat ability, was appointed as interim commander, and was made to distribute avatars to all points where small rifts were expected to occur to command. The divine doll Galatea was deployed at key points of each battle to prepare for the worst possible situations.

'Bringing ordinary magical girls and just setting them up would only increase meaningless sacrifices...'

With a small elite group of the strongest magical girls, we quickly break through the starlight plundering and fake magical girls imitating girls from a destroyed fate, and defeat the demons escaping from the trial rifts in one breath.

Hecate, the magical girl of [Revelation]

Yuki, the magical girl of [Love]

Ichika, the magical girl of [Freedom]

Sumire, the magical girl of [Protection]

Hana, the magical girl of [Swiftness]

Himari, the magical girl of [Nursing]

A bold number bringing all the central figures except [Death] and [Cyberbrain] who will support from the rear.

Originally, the strategy for the third trial should be to save civilians from the giant boar advancing endlessly from Russia to southern

China, together with numerous magical girls.

'...It's changed.'

Through the experience of dealing with [Plague] and the sea serpent that disappeared between rifts, I concluded that the more ordinary magical girls gather on this battlefield, the more completely the balance of offense and defense would collapse.

'Magical girls have now come to trust each other and become strong enough to help protect each other.'

I believe in them who can now have hearts preparing for tomorrow rather than despairing at the fate of destruction.

While thinking that, I tried to shake off any worries in my heart.

Swoosh

The summer wind laden with moisture from the damp coniferous forest shook my hair, and Yuki approached from the group silently preparing their battle stances in the silence.

"I don't see any mosquitoes."

"Mosquitoes?"

"Yeah, I had a hard time with mosquitoes on the way to [Death]... another Alisa's domain before. In the end, I just took short naps while wrapping myself in flame starlight and burned them all away."

Looking back, I saw a girl dyed in brilliant white like her name.

Her hair, dress, and even the flames burning in her eyes had turned white.

A magical girl burning completely dazzling white flames beyond the red-burning [Flame] and [Resurrection].

Fully Bloomed 3-star Magical Girl of [Love]

Yuki

Yuki's magical girl outfit had changed to look similar to mine for some reason.

Though completely different in appearance, a mystical atmosphere imbued with white and warm energy.

Is it because she was influenced by the goddess of [Beginning] just like me?

'Or maybe me...'

Poke

Yuki brought her finger to my face with a gentle smile.

Her warm, slender finger tickled my cheek, and beyond it I could feel the energy of white-burning flames. Not as fiercely burning as before, but a stronger flame that burns quietly and brilliantly without leaving a single regret...

Complete combustion.

'Come to think of it, fire has been treated as sacred since ancient times... because it exists so naturally by our side. And because it gives warmth and hope.'

Though [Resurrection] is commonly thought of first as a miracle used by gods. Perhaps [Love] that naturally stays by one's side like a quietly burning flame is actually closer to a truly divine fate.

A fate that burns so quietly and calmly because it is so enormous.

'Even if I'm biased because she's my favorite, I can't help but feel that aliases like [Flame] and [Love] are closer to a goddess's fate than [Hope], no matter how I look at it.'

Calmness.

Quietness.

Warmth.

Small, but therefore equal to the world... and walking together with humans.

As I was thinking that, some divinity fitting for Yuki seemed to flash by in the goddess's vision, but.

It wasn't certain yet.

Even so, because of Yuki's reassuring appearance, my worries disappeared and a small sense of awe began to take root in my heart.

From around that time, I also started to feel embarrassed by this appearance.

I could hear Ichika, Sumire, and Himari glancing over from afar and saying something about Yuki's actions of poking my cheek since earlier.

-Is that... right?

-Well... we can't... do that.

-...Because... we are.

-Heh.

I couldn't hear clearly what they were saying, but it felt somehow ticklish and strange.

"..."

I thought she would just touch briefly and remove her hand, but Yuki remained still with the same smiling face.

"Um... what are you doing?"

"A trick to keep you from worrying too much."

"Worrying?"

"Hikari, you're worried about the other magical girls, aren't you?"

"..."

"It's okay. I, who have seen destruction and returned, will guarantee it. Hikari, you've done your best."

"...Is that so?"

"I'll be by your side. As much as you were by my side. As much as you listened to my story while turning the pages."

"...Thank you."

And so, on that quiet morning, in front of the coniferous forest of Siberia.

We waited for the magical girls of [Plague] to cross over to this world.

* * *

Sing of wrath, O goddess of greed.

The wrath of the eldest daughter of the most ancient goddess, who called herself darkness.

"The time... has come...!"

"Raise the stairs of darkness."

"Those who sing of the countless girls' pain."

"Raise the altar of darkness."

"Devour the weak goddesses who curse everything for their worthless return."

What flows down her pale face are tears of longing.

Tears of longing that she yearns for more than anyone, though she has never experienced it.

What she grasps in both hands is a scale that devours everything.

Evidence of a fate that must suffer unreasonably, born unreasonably.

The delusions left behind by countless girls from the destroyed world.

The army of greed that put on those delusions was gathered around Erebos.

"We desire a miracle."

Erebos, with four huge black stars on her back under the swirling flow of chaos, was raising her hands to create a miracle.

What gathered in the hands of the girl fluttering her black dress was the power of the world allowed by the stars.

What flows under the feet of girls imitating the dead is chaos.

The girls carefully placed chaos, the substance closest to the most fundamental constituent of the world, on the scales. The fragments of chaos that should have scattered futilely as soon as they were touched by hand accepted the touch of the army of greed and changed into the form they wanted to create.

"Let's make a miracle, a miracle where we can be happy in this unreasonable world."

What they construct are stairs.

Countless stairs that can reach the throne of nothingness beyond the distant sky.

"Memories of the dead wandering in forgotten time under the dragon of destruction, unable to return to the flow of stars even after death."

Guuuung—!!

To harvest the starlight enjoyed by those living outside of chaos on the surface of the star. The first thing they chose was the theft of divinity.

The inherent divinity flowing from the fourth star is not enough.

The power of the foolish three goddesses who are still thinking of sprinkling curses to weaken the will of humanity while waiting for

the time of trial when the boundaries of space and time become blurred. We will completely plunder the power of the weak goddesses who ruled the era that has already passed.

"The era we will live in... is the era of greed...!!"

Erebos prepared to activate thousands of stairs and black miracles through the rift that would soon open. When this rift opens, they will advance towards the three goddesses sitting helplessly on the throne of nothingness.

All souls living in this world will be dyed with the starlight of chaos and greed, their memories and lives will be plundered, and the infinitely multiplying army will finally gain its own identity.

Just as plague does not exist in a world where all humans are sick.

If all humans become the army of greed, there will be no difference between them and humanity.

Chapter 134 : How to Overcome Greed (3)

The time when the descent of the trial had come right before us.

The group had gathered around me, confirming the black and red energy slowly beginning to coalesce in the sky.

I exchanged glances with each of the gathered magical girls.

Hana, scattering the energy of small meteors from her yellow dress.

Ichika, brushing back her green hair fluttering over her silver light armor.

"Hikari-chan! It looks like a rift is forming in the sky!"

"Yeah, it seems so."

"Whew, thinking about fighting those slimy guys makes me tired."

Sumire, hiding her arms and legs replaced with silver prosthetics under a lavender kimono.

Himari, shining her golden hair and eyes while wearing a clean white nurse's uniform.

"Hikari-san, good luck. It's an honor to stand on the same battlefield."

"Yes, thank you, Sumire."

"I suppose I'll have to take care of these megalomaniac patients wearing the dead from a destroyed world."

And Hecate and Yuki approaching behind me.

"This time, for sure. I will fight."

"Yeah, I'll fight a battle we won't be ashamed of in front of everyone."

I was so reassured by this that I could only smile.

With them, it felt like we could overcome any trial, any world.

I wasn't afraid of clumsy gods or the will of stars.

'Mother.'

I really want to show you.

These are such reliable comrades.

These are the ones who took my hand beyond the story in the novel.

[Red atmosphere confirmed! The third trial begins!]

Roar—

Suddenly changed atmosphere.

Sky dyed red.

Due to the ominously changed air, countless birds flew up and fled from the surrounding coniferous forest, and the center of Siberia, where not a single insect had been seen since earlier, was filled with an unpleasant silence.

'Now the goddesses' curse begins.'

The moment when the barrier separating the will of stars and the surface world weakens due to the trial, and the throne of nothingness can interfere. The three goddesses will distort one law of the world as a curse to interfere.

The goddesses' method of throwing a small curse, changing fate in a chain reaction, and completely destroying the opponent was very fatal.

"Everyone, be careful of the goddesses' curse..."

It was just as I was about to warn everyone once again.

Guuuuuung—!!

Huge wave.

The earth shook, and the air fluctuated.

Although it was already a battlefield where most birds and insects had fled, due to the huge wave, nothing remained in this area except for magical girls.

Black and red energy surged from a huge rift estimated to be over several hundred meters in size, pouring out enormous structures. They looked like giant stone pillars, or like planks carved from gray stone.

'Are these structures of the magical girls of [Plague], like Animus's war monument?!'

Thousands of identical structures were fired with tremendous sound while enveloped in black starlight tinged with gold, and thousands of stone fragments that completely escaped the rift and rose into the sky circled around a girl wrapped in black starlight.

Black dress

Black crown

Four black stars

The magical girl of [Plague] had transformed into a 4-star magical girl wrapped in divinity.

The black magical girl floating proudly in the sky while emitting an ominous aura looked at us. Fake magical girls were slowly escaping from the rift open behind her.

Thousands of stone fragments, thousands of fake magical girls. I couldn't even imagine what they were planning to do.

"[Plague]?!"

"My name is Erebos, the magical girl of [Greed]."

"...Erebos."

"One who will usurp the gods and devour the world."

"...What?"

God

Goddess

Three goddesses

The magical girl of [Greed] seemed to have made up her mind to attack the goddesses before humans.

'Erebos was planning to attack the three goddesses. Even though she was incorporated into the trial due to the goddesses' curse, she doesn't particularly like them... rather, she's full of hostility.'

However, it wasn't that Erebos had released her hostility towards humanity either. This could be seen from the desire for longing felt from the thousands of pale fake magical girls standing behind her. They still wanted to plunder this world beyond their own flaws.

What Erebos chose was a third path.

The will of stars.

'Usurping the goddesses.'

For a moment, several images flashed through my mind.

The thousands of stone steps that the completely despairing Yuki climbed up to the throne of nothingness in the ending of the novel. The fragments of the world left behind by the three goddesses who fled into the will of stars after destroying humanity, unable to endure the nothingness.

The thousands of stone fragments floating around Erebos certainly looked like stairs.

"You... are you planning to go to the throne of nothingness with the help of the will of stars?"

"..."

Erebos just slowly raised her pale arms to the sky with a crooked smile. But that action became a more certain answer than any verbal response.

Guuuuuung—!!!!

Golden starlight poured out from the wave resonating once again from the rift and was sprinkled on thousands of stone fragments. No longer shabby gray stone fragments, but steps of nothingness that became fragments of gods and miracles imbued with chaos and the power of stars.

"Leader!! What the hell is that guy trying to do?!"

Ichika shouted urgently, sensing that something was going wrong, and Hana, Sumire, and Himari around her could also be felt anxious, though they weren't speaking.

"After the final trial... she's trying to create a path leading to the throne of nothingness that should only appear after humanity is completely destroyed. She plans to absorb the three goddesses sprinkling curses from there."

"Isn't that good then?!"

"Only if she wasn't hostile to humanity."

"Then it's really bad!!"

"We have to stop her for now."

"Got it!! Sato.!! Let's go!!"

"Okay! Hikari-chan, we have to be careful!"

"Hana-chan, be careful too!"

Flash

Thousands of yellow meteors suddenly appeared, and a green giant advanced with thunderous steps, and thousands of unblossomed fake magical girls rushed towards Ichika and Hana advancing like that.

Because they hadn't realized their true power in the destroyed world, their individual power was too small and feeble, but the aura of jealousy and greed emitting from thousands of starlight was enough to hold back the feet of the two fully bloomed magical girls.

"Whoa?! There's so many?!"

"Ugh!! Don't interfere!!"

Thousands of feeble starlights pouring down.

Psychic

Blink

Basic magic they had used to the point of nausea in the destroyed world.

Shabby fragments of power incomparable to brilliantly shining unique skills.

[We... we wanted to shine like that too!!]

[If only there was someone to tell us how to shine...!!]

[I'll take it all!! Everything!!]

[This world was originally ours!!]

Towards the thousands of magical girls rushing in like that, an elegant golden girl stood in the way. With each step she took, she elegantly pulled a golden chainsaw, starting its engine.

Vroom—!

Vroom—!

"You really are delusional patients."

Vroom—!

Vroom—!

"There are many unblossomed girls in the relief corps too, but at least they set out to find things they could do themselves."

Vroom—!

Vroom—!

"I admit that the miracle that started from the magical girl of [Beginning] changed us."

Finally, the strongest unique weapon of the magical girl of [Nursing] started up.

Vrooooom—!!

Kagagagak—!!

"But the dreams of magical girls who found their own paths in that changed world. They were achieved entirely by their own will."

Himari, apart from the apostles and the girls of Elysion, along with Sato Hana, carried the greatest fate and magnificently bloomed it.

A golden flower that bloomed from a place no one had imagined, along with Sato Hana, among the seeds I had merely sown.

"This world is not yours. Disappear."

Charururuk—!!

The will of the relief corps magical girls who had saved countless people and rushed around until now exploded, resonating from hundreds of surgical tools floating around Himari.

-I'm glad we could save people!

-I'm glad I joined the relief corps.

-It's hard but rewarding.

The will of the girls who shone most brilliantly.

A pure heart wanting to save people.

Devotion to care for others.

The fully bloomed 3-star magical girl of [Nursing] came here representing the will of thousands of relief corps members.

Amidst the golden energy resonating from the golden saw blade, Sumire joined in, wielding a naginata and katana in both hands, scattering lavender energy.

"Poor people, living clinging to memories that aren't even their own. If that's the only life you can live, I'll take on that resentment."

The enormous starlight emitted by the four fully bloomed magical girls shone brilliantly, breaking through the jealousy and greed sprinkled by thousands of unblossomed magical girls.

On the battlefield where yellow meteors fell, green giants rampaged, and golden saw blades rotated, lavender violets poured down like blades.

"Yuki, Hecate!"

"Yeah!"

"Understood."

Leaving behind the fully bloomed magical girls dealing with the fake magical girls, we charged towards Erebos, who was extending space towards the throne of nothingness.

Chapter 135 : How to Overcome Greed (4)

Vrooom—!!

Where the golden chainsaw passed, numerous black fragments fell off. Fake magical girls disappearing, swept away by the golden trajectory without even leaving a scream amidst the resounding roar.

Girls holding cold darkness under the red sky.

In the orchestra of roars played by the golden girl, there was no room for the screams of ghosts wearing shadows of the past world.

Thousands of surgical tools.

Hundreds of fake magical girls.

And just one chainsaw.

Vrooom—!!

Charuruk

Charuruk

Following the movements of the magical girl of [Nursing] fluttering her white skirt, golden surgical tools swirl and rotate like a whirlpool.

Sometimes quietly. Sometimes fiercely. Sometimes warmly.

The will of the relief corps contained in surgical tools brilliantly dyed golden, like leaves falling under a fully colored ginkgo tree on an autumn day.

Even if they started with different intentions, the will of girls who wore pure white uniforms to help someone was overlaid on thousands of golden surgical tools, sweeping away the delusions of girls who only used magical girl powers to harm others.

"..."

Another familiar face flashed across Himari's eyes.

Was it the girl whose parents did traditional crafts in Kyoto? She didn't complain even once while dealing with a patient's irritability at the first scene she was dispatched to.

Vrooom—!!

Another familiar girl's face flashed by between the swinging chainsaw.

It must have been the girl who came all the way from India wanting to learn how to heal people with starlight. She was treated like a goddess in her hometown, but she said she wanted to truly face people from the lowest place.

'Ah, they were people with such kind hearts.'

Eyes filled with killing intent

Bloodshot faces

Mouths spewing vile curses

'In a world ruined by the goddesses' curses and trials...'

And so once again,

Once again it flashes by.

'...You were even deprived of the opportunity to bloom your inner nobility.'

Caught up in the gods' curses in the destroyed world, without even a shred of the noble appearance they had shown in this world, perhaps

the appearance she herself would have shown if there had been no [Beginning].

Himari, as the head of the relief corps where ordinary magical girls first knock on doors to help others, more than Hikari at the pinnacle of all magical girls or Sumire as the head of the council. She had conversed and interacted with more magical girls than any other magical girl.

Himari, who had always taken a step back at the moment the world changed.

But that one step was a step towards the scene where magical girls face people.

She could see the noble mindset and goodwill of magical girls.

Not every magical girl had such a mindset, but at least she could see the sincerity of the many girls who directly knocked on the door of the relief corps.

-Thank you for coming to such a dangerous place...

-Thank you for treating my mother!

-Am I, am I really healthy now?!

Because she had walked in a place closest to the world where ordinary people live more than anyone else in the changed world, she knew better than anyone how warm the tomorrow that the girls she was now cutting down had wanted.

-Thank you, Chief!

-Will you come to the party the original relief corps members are planning this time?

-Hehe, Chief Himari. Thank you.

Thank you.

I'm grateful.

Such small greetings.

Hope

Love

They originate from such small gratitude, and became the light to live tomorrow.

Not everyone was bright, not everyone was righteous.

But there certainly existed precious and non-negotiable values in the hearts of the girls.

Therefore, more firmly and coolly than anyone else here.

"I cannot let this world be taken away. Because I am the chief of the relief corps. Because I have seen more of the good hearts of magical girls existing in this world than anyone else."

Vrooom—!!

"If their good hearts go against fate, I will reject even the fate set by the gods."

The golden saw blade rotated, cutting away the delusions of the past once again.

The girl who received the opportunity to bloom nobility in the changed world. She danced like an angel, holding in her heart thousands of golden surgical tools like golden fallen leaves, and the will of girls who wanted to help others.

Because she had most clearly observed human goodwill, the girl who believed in human goodwill more than anyone fought against the curses and greed spewed out by the destroyed world with a heart harder than steel.

* * *

[Everything was taken away by adults, everything...!!]

"Is that so."

[Kyoko, Noah, Aoi, Mizuki, Momoka, everyone...!!]

"That must have been hard."

[Don't act so smug!!!]

"Is that how I look?"

Ichika's heart was just indifferent.

Although the black starlight endlessly absorbing her own starlight interfered, the attacks unleashed by the girl in front of her were merely violent and posed no threat.

'The proper growth as a magical girl, it's scary.'

So this is how much difference it makes.

Ichika was just listening to the complaints spewed by the girl in front of her with a calm heart like a quiet lake. Even if the memories that girl had were real, she wasn't the real self from another world to begin with. In fact, even if the real other self came, she didn't think she would be very shaken.

'Because I am me.'

Because it's oneself that defines oneself.

[Uwaaaaah!!!!]

A shouted scream

Green energy unleashed like a storm

Flash—!

But the fist that advanced drawing a single green line was futilely blocked.

The desperate strike of the girl in a green sailor uniform shouting with a terrible scream was not particularly threatening to Ichika now.

She just blocked it indifferently with her outstretched palm.

Thuuung—!!

A huge green palm indifferently peeled off the killing intent contained in the other Ichika's attack, pushing away the girl filled with resentment towards the world.

[Kugh?!]

If the fist desperately stretched out by the other Ichika was an underdeveloped dandelion, the tremendous force contained in the single strike Ichika indifferently unleashed was a fully bloomed sunflower on a hot summer day.

Their understanding of 'freedom' was different, and the depth of experience they had gone through was different.

A beast that had lived blindly expressing anger in killing intent could not withstand the free will that had returned as pure goodwill to protect others after numerous battles.

"...Nyorai Shincho."

Ichika just listened to her story for a while until she tired out, as a final respect for her own shadow who might have walked the same fate. Even this, if it seemed to take too long, she planned to end it quickly and go help the leader.

[Uwaaah!! You who luckily crawled out of the warehouse!! Are you mocking me!!]

She indifferently deflected the attack of her other self who was frowning like a beast and surging with black energy right in front of her.

'Ah, I see. So this is what I would have looked like.'

The Fujimoto warehouse that she could barely remember now.

If it hadn't been for Hikari who took Ichika out of there, she would have become like that.

Like the magical girl of [Sword], not even knowing who to resent properly, just swinging fists while covered in the resentment of others.

Just one year.

It had only been one year since meeting Hikari, but she had changed this much.

Her life, a single flower, an old monk's fist, an old temple, a cold orphanage, a piece of bread, a shabby apartment, crowded girls, a housewarming party, Tokyo's night view, fights with thugs, ruined Beijing, a black sword, delusion, grudge, resentment.

Everything flows and changes.

Musō (no-form).

All things are fleeting and just pass by, so only one's own mindset can liberate one's own world.

I believe.

I believe I am free.

Because Usō (form) exists, Musō exists.

Because there are constraints, freedom exists.

What distinguishes within that is one's own belief.

The first question.

"Hey, why do you fight?"

[I'll kill all the adults who took away my freedom!!]

"Who exactly do you mean by adults? This is messed up."

[The bastards who locked us up!! Those who obey them!! Just the whole world!!]

"So you're taking out your anger on anyone because you don't know

well."

The problem wasn't being weak, but being evil.

The weak other self was clearly evil.

[I don't know!! Such things!! I'll just kill!!]

"Then I'll have to stop you."

You don't know freedom because you've forgotten yourself.

You can't be formless because you don't know form.

'Even if not everything is your fault, you've clearly chosen evil.'

It must be a life worse than death.

Then I'll end it once again.

I'll stop righteous malice with arrogant goodwill.

"Rest in peace. You'll get hit if you crawl out again."

Ichika unleashed the strongest strike on the dead who would only spread chaos in this world, just as she had once done in Beijing. As a senior who realized before her other self, a fist unleashed with the meaning of 'freedom' that the master had tried to teach.

A green strike.

A blooming lotus

"Hyakuho Shinken. This is what the master tried to teach 'us'."

[The old man...?]

"How can you forget even what you like most."

[What I... like.]

The question and answer between master and disciple once exchanged in an old temple.

-I'm just so happy to get stronger!

Because I can help more people.

Like a chivalrous hero.

[Not... revenge.]

In the space filled with green, the pale girl wrapped in black starlight murmured.

[A chivalrous... hero...]

Baaaang—!!

The magical girl of freedom who had forgotten the meaning of freedom disappeared feebly, leaving black fragments in front of the huge fist. The scattered black fragments were absorbed into Erebos' embrace, who was climbing the stairs far away.

"Rest in peace... you fool."

May you meet a suspicious silver-haired fox-eyed girl in your next life.

May you live a life freely roaming the streets and helping people in your next life.

May your life be as bright as a sunflower blooming by the roadside.

May you live happily like me.

"...Another me."

Ichika prayed sincerely.

Chapter 136 : How to Overcome Greed (5)

Thousands of stairs crossing the red sky.

At their end, a huge gray throne that shouldn't be visible began to shimmer.

The fake miracle shimmering with surging gold and black was distorting even the laws of the world, dragging down the three goddesses, who were mere observers and hindrances, onto the stage.

True meaning of blasphemy. True meaning of usurpation.

An incomparable hostility was overflowing from the sacred space where the three goddesses resided. A threat pouring down on one truly trying to blaspheme against the gods, different from the hostility until now that was somehow full of emptiness and mockery.

Sacred incantation.

Primordial language.

The language of the gods and the primordial language mixed, spreading as bizarre and disgusting sounds.

A sticky killing intent so intense that even hearing it could make low-ranking humans collapse vomiting blood.

The confusion spilled by the three goddesses who had only mocked while overseeing <Magical Girl HAZARD> as they appeared on stage for the first time.

The hostility sent by the goddesses of [Plague] and [War].

[■■■...■■!!]

[Eternally curse ■■■■!!]

"Pfft, huhuhuhu...! You really look like scared little mice."

The girl wearing a black crown mocked them.

She mocked with all her might to the point where even a faint blush appeared on her pale face.

Because the curse of the three goddesses was powerless before the power allowed by the will of stars.

"Hahahahaha!!! It's really funny!!! Really stupid!!"

Golden light surged from the halo formed by black stars gathered in a pointed shape, and because it was the light of permission granted by the father of the goddesses and the greatest will overseeing this world.

Erebos could mock the three goddesses.

"Really... even gods are no different from children before chaos."

Erebos was advancing step by step, grasping the hem of her strange dress where nobility and shabbiness coexisted. At the end of her gaze was the bewilderment and agitation of the three goddesses abandoned by the will of stars, their father and the great primordial chaos.

"And you tried to make me so miserable, mock me, and use me like that?"

Foolish [Beginning]

Weak [Plague]

Hot-tempered [War]

And...

"Hello. Mother. Thanks to the curse you placed on the apostles rather than the goddess of [Beginning], I lived bearing the shabby alias of

destruction. So I can call you my mother rather than [Beginning] or [Plague], right?"

[...]

"You really look pathetic. I can see why you lived hiding in the throne of nothingness. Even now you look like a ghost, forcibly descending in an avatar. I guess it doesn't matter if even the goddess of death dies."

There was a being blocking the stairs not far from the throne of nothingness.

Originally, divinity rejected by humanity couldn't interfere with the world, but because it was a trial where the boundary separating the realm of gods and the human world was blurred. She was able to descend with very feeble power, barely.

Curse of the world.

The one responsible for changing fate so that no apostle could properly protect the human world.

The daughter of the world who had existed the longest after the goddess of [Beginning].

The second most noble goddess who had fallen since death itself was no longer an object of faith but established as a cold concept.

The goddess of [Death].

A translucent divinity wrapped in a black veil. A goddess born from the concept of 'death' without any name, as she had existed even before the names of the gods were determined.

Born from human will, resembling humans, mocking humans, and hating humans, she forcibly crossed the veil of the world.

Just to stop the usurper.

[...We shall return.]

"Why? Why are you suddenly using an arrogant tone? Hm? Where did those detestable tones go that you used to mock while overseeing ＜Magical Girl HAZARD＞? Hm?"

[Return, usurper.]

"Get lost. You're not scary at all, so just be quietly absorbed."

The goddess of [Greed]... Erebos reached out her hand to absorb the one responsible for plunging her into the cruel curse of division and multiplication, as the first step to usurp the world.

[...I curse you.]

The goddess of [Death] reached out her hand to place the strongest evil god's curse to protect the throne of nothingness where the main bodies of the three goddesses were, to complete the final curse slowly growing inside the throne of nothingness.

"Stop it."

"...Hmm?"

[...]

To the two beings about to exchange malicious gestures towards each other, a girl aiming a shining white arrow approached.

Guuuuung—

A halo shining with brilliant white stars gathered in a cross shape.

A complete world.

A world of hope.

A girl dreaming of a dazzlingly bright tomorrow, not a world destined for destruction.

The goddess of [Hope], fluttering brilliantly shining white starlight and dress hem, ready to unleash the greatest strike at any time.

God,

Stars,

And human will.

The three goddesses representing the three wills gathered here on this chaotic stage.

* * *

"..."

What is going on?

I was truly confused.

[Plague], who suddenly appeared, colluded with the will of stars to become a new divine 4-star magical girl, and the throne of nothingness that should appear at the end of the trials forcibly appeared, tearing through space.

'If we can... if we can rush to the end of the trials like this...!'

One thing was certain: even if one side of Erebos or the avatar sent by the goddess of [Death] won, it wouldn't be particularly good for humanity. With the thought of getting rid of both sides at once, I prepared the strongest attack while breaking through the interference of numerous [Greed] armies.

'If only I could shoot this arrow and eliminate both sides at once...!'

There are comrades still continuing to fight against the delusions of magical girls who lived in the destroyed world within the authority absorbing starlight even now.

I was worried about magical girls all over the world who would be continuing difficult battles away from the protection of the strongest magical girls.

The two enemies standing before my eyes.

The power sent with difficulty by the goddess of [Death], who has the strongest power among the three goddesses.

The apostle moving with the most selfish purpose among the four apostles.

The two who will clearly be the most troublesome enemies in this fight.

"Hikari!"

"Successor!"

Two girls wrapped in white flames and silver-white energy appeared behind me. They were each wrapped in starlight, ready to move immediately according to my judgment.

The successors left by the goddess of [Beginning].

And comrades who transcended even the path she prepared.

The two most reliable people regarding matters involving the three goddesses are behind me.

There will never be a better opportunity and preparation than this again.

'Let's do it...! If not now...!'

As I was about to shoot the arrow towards the openings shown by the two beings, seeing Yuki, Hecate, and me appearing one after another.

Erebos' pale face, which had been looking at everything with a crooked smile until just now, turned towards me.

What she whispered was my greatest greed.

"Don't you want to go home?"

"What?"

"Home, I mean. Not here where the goddess of [Beginning] suddenly called you, but the universe where you really lived. Where everything you truly loved is."

Erebos seemed to know about the one foreign substance that didn't

exist there because she had seen the destroyed universe from the will of stars.

A foreigner brought by the goddess of [Beginning], unrelated to the original fate of this star.

My identity.

My purpose.

She spoke while pointing at the goddess of [Death] with her pale hand. Befitting the goddess of [Greed], she was slowly trying to draw out the one desire that would be most effective at this moment from my heart.

My greed completely unrelated to this world.

"You know. If you kill their main bodies in the throne of nothingness, 'fragments of the world' will remain. With that, you can interfere with other dimensions and universes by borrowing the power of this star."

"...Universe."

"Yeah. Why are you stupidly going through trials one by one? Why is a guest getting involved in the host's worries? The will of stars allowed me in the first place, you know?"

"..."

"If you just don't interfere with me, I'll hand that over to you. And all I want is to 'exist' by inheriting the memories of humanity living in this world. I have no other greed. What do you think?"

I can go see my mother.

I can go heal my mother.

Perhaps I could live enjoying happiness incomparable to anything until now through all the magical girls' unique skills.

As much opportunity as I gave to this world,

I too can take from this world.

It was a very intense proposal.

But...

"Anyway, for you who came from another universe, the affairs of this universe are just like a 'story'. Why are you exerting yourself so much? Isn't it enough to just exist even if it's fake?"

"No."

"Huh?"

"It's not a story."

Erebos didn't know.

I love this world too.

I loved it even before coming to this world.

I walked alongside one girl's life and watched everything.

This proposal is the false ending for me.

[Hope] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

All Things Flow

"I want the hope that all the people I love have for themselves, not the three goddesses or the will of stars."

Flash—!!

An arrow containing enormous light was fired.

To the point where nothing could be seen for a moment, ending with the sight of Erebos and the avatar left by the goddess of [Death] each preparing for the tremendous strike.

The red sky was filled with dazzling white light.

Chapter 137 : Boundary Line (1)

After the white flash passed.

Erebos, barely maintaining an opaque form, and the goddess of [Death] appeared.

Black fragments gathering again under the pointed halo.

A faint remnant like mist faintly glowing in the dark night.

Erebos, born with a fate of endlessly dividing and multiplying her very existence, had almost completely annihilated but was rapidly regenerating. The avatar left behind by the goddess of [Death] was wavering like mist, leaving only a feeble presence, perhaps due to the influence of unstable descent.

What was certain was that they had barely managed to maintain their forms by mobilizing all their transcendent powers against my attack, which was close to a surprise attack, and that they had expended no small amount of power doing so.

"Kugh...?!"

[Huu...]

Erebos kicked off the stairs and charged at me. The black starlight flowing from her entire body like tentacles, with the help of golden energy, tried to absorb the white starlight surrounding my body.

Gooooo—!!

Black and white repeatedly pulling and pushing.

We faced each other below the stairs made of fake miracles below the throne of nothingness.

Me and Erebos.

The brightest colored starlight and the darkest colored starlight met, creating a clear boundary like the darkness just before dawn. The black and white starlight absorbed and repelled each other, completely separating a space of several hundred meters in radius.

Faaaash—!!

Rather than dealing with the avatar left behind by the goddess of [Death], who was struggling just to exist due to unstable descent, Erebos was emitting the power of [Greed] to directly usurp me, the most threatening divinity interfering with all her plans.

[Greed] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Great Greed is Unrighteous

The power of the world that allows one to usurp even the gods who distorted oneself.

Her unique skill imbued with golden energy was clearly taking away divinity little by little.

But what she was overlooking was:

'My starlight shines infinitely, bound by everyone's hopes.'

Is this what someone who connects a pump to seawater and smiles maliciously looks like?

'If it wasn't me she was facing, she probably would have stolen even divinity and become the strongest magical girl.'

I didn't feel very pleased by the appearance of this heretic who had shaken me with the most intense temptation before the fight, and was completely twisting the fate of the gods and the world as she pleased.

Perhaps because it was similar to my own appearance, arbitrarily manipulating the fate of this world that should have originally been destroyed. And because the fragments of selfishness she held were not entirely incomprehensible.

Because I might sympathize with the wish residing in that ugly appearance.

Because I could understand how that ugly appearance came to be.

I wanted to cut it off more resolutely.

Because now, countless people's dreams and futures depend on the path I've taken.

Because that path, which looks like a shortcut, has become a path of running away from everything and fleeing even further than before.

I declared to Erebos, who was still trying to absorb infinite starlight:

"It's useless."

"Do you know what I'm trying to do?"

"A pointless act."

While repelling the usurpation of souls that Erebos was endlessly trying to invade and steal, I slowly created a white sickle. Erebos, daunted by the infinite starlight that could not be dominated no matter how much she tried to steal it with the power of [Greed], quickly retreated back again.

In one raised hand was contained the will representing the hundreds of millions of souls still dividing even now.

A command towards all armies endlessly flowing from within the rift, from chaos.

Erebos' massive halo shone.

"Army of [Greed]!! Usurp the throne of nothingness where the bodies of the three goddesses reside!!"

[Aah...!! The power of the goddesses!! Who played with us...!!]

[The goddesses who tore apart our fate as they pleased!!]

[Let's take everything away!!]

-Hikari-chan!! Be careful!! They're all suddenly climbing up!!

-Leader!! I'll come help soon!! Wait!!

The magical girls of [Plague] who had been endlessly pouring out from below the rift, facing the yellow meteors, green giant, golden saw blade, and lavender violets.

The armies of [Greed] that had imitated the starlight held by the magical girls of the destroyed world.

Armies that steal surrounding starlight just by existing.

A massive black wave of starlight, numbering tens of thousands, perhaps even over hundreds of thousands, rose up from the rift and battlefield, charging towards the stairs leading to the throne of nothingness. Their advance looked like a huge black wave crashing over the red sky.

Wooooong—

The words uttered by countless black magical girls became a massive resonance of over millions of noises, making the skin tingle.

-Notice from each small rift! The magical girls of [Plague] that appeared at each rift are returning into the rifts!!

-Notice from Elysion Observatory!! Over millions of magical girls of [Plague] are pouring out from within the trial rift!!

Concentration of all forces.

"..."

What had looked like a massive black wave gradually approached until it was close enough for everyone's expressions to be visible. I heard Yuki and Hecate behind me casting magic to protect themselves.

-Hikari-chan!!

-Hikari-san!!

I could feel golden, yellow, green, and lavender starlight struggling to approach while protecting themselves from far away.

The crowd of magical girls covering the vast Siberian coniferous forest like clouds.

The advance of cursed magical girls who use the ability to steal starlight as easily as breathing, trying to steal not just starlight and fate, but even the world itself.

A number so immense that it could not all be dealt with just by my white shooting star or the magical girls' unique skills.

[Our new fate!!]

[We'll take back this world!!]

[Revenge on the goddesses...!]

[We yearn!!]

[We yearn for tomorrow!!]

Tatatatatatata—!!!

[Uwaaa!! Give it back!!! Give everything back!!!]

Machine gun fire came flying from somewhere, approaching while emitting black starlight. A fake Li Na who had come up, avoiding Himari who was desperately trying to prevent the escape of fake 2-star magical girls below.

The fiercely distorted face of the fake Li Na.

The face of the fake magical girl imitating Li Na.

Perhaps the face of the 'original' Li Na.

-Boss, living together with Nanami, Kohane, and Kaede isn't bad. I still haven't found Dad, and the kids haven't found their families either, but... tomorrow could be better, right?

I recalled Li Na's face when she apologized for what happened in

Kabukicho, revealing that she had actually been secretly sending the salary she received from Sumire anonymously as repair costs for the shops in Kabukicho.

To protect the life of Li Na living in the current world, for the tomorrow of the girl who tried to move forward despite being full of mistakes.

I cut down the approaching fake Li Na with the white sickle.

The scar drawn by the white trajectory was so sharp that it cut through the delusions of the girl completely broken in the fate distorted by the gods in one swift stroke without pain.

Shaaaash—!!

[Kuaah...?!]

And behind her came another Sumire, Natalia, and Chen Lihua advancing while deploying their unique skills.

Unique skills contaminated by black starlight.

Navy ship

Lavender blade

Murky lightning

"Successor, I will help you focus."

Hecate fired a silver-white bow to check the three advancing magical girls. She shot hundreds of branching silver-white arrows and briefly looked back.

A faint smile on her lips.

"Thank you, for choosing this world once again."

"...It's nothing."

To give peace to all the delusions of magical girls rushing from the destroyed world, and to prevent Erebos' selfishness from devouring

this world. I aimed the white bow at Erebos once again.

What was rushing towards us was a massive wave of magical girls.

Infinite starlight.

A world created by human dreams different from the will of stars.

To put an end to their division and multiplication all at once with that enormous power.

'With all my might... with all my power. Peace to you all.'

And behind me, warm white flames blazed, supporting my choice. Yuki, who had firmly believed I would not choose to leave for another universe even amidst Erebos' temptation.

The girl wrapped in white flames warmer than red brought forth huge flame lotuses in both hands.

As the gathered flower buds slowly bloomed, they blossomed into flowers of light as gentle as the girl's hot and warm love.

The lotus petals that had been palm-sized grew larger with each petal opening, warmly embracing everything.

Both hands,

The whole body,

And the two of us,

It advanced, becoming a massive white flame flower shielding all the world we wish to protect.

[Love] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Love-Dyed White Fire

The massive lotus of love warmly enveloped and protected the two of us from the millions of advancing magical girls. Hundreds of petals fluttered chaotically, wrapping around us to allow a moment's respite from the massive army rushing in with malice.

Erebos, controlling [Plague] and [Greed], hid herself in the massive wave made of black magical girls, and that huge wave was rushing to break down the dimensional wall hiding the throne of nothingness.

I aimed my arrow, sensing Erebos' starlight hidden within.

It wasn't certain because she was hidden among so many magical girls.

Even so, thanks to the opening Yuki created, I could calmly aim at Erebos again.

"Thank you."

"I should be thanking you."

Yuki grasped both my hands from behind me.

Two hands warmly overlapping.

The warmth felt within them.

No longer showing any of the hesitation displayed by the weak girl I had seen in the novel.

What we are living in is not the world of the novel, but the reality after that.

Faaaash—!!

Gentle white flame starlight is added on top of the slowly gathered white starlight.

"Leader!!"

Ichika, who had approached at some point, roughly grabbed my shoulder, and green starlight seeped in and was engraved on the arrow.

Ichika who trusts me.

"Hikari-chan!!"

Yellow starlight approached from Hana's small palm that embraced my waist with a dazzling flash.

My friend Hana.

"Hikari-san!"

Lavender starlight settled from the kimono sleeve extended by Sumire, who approached with a resolute voice.

Sumire who took responsibility for the world I opened up.

[Trust]

[Friendship]

[Responsibility]

'Ah.'

The world we have created has certainly surpassed the original fate.

To the extent that even the gap we surpassed has become a new fate.

I understand.

The second alias is probably:

'Those who surpassed the original fate because of me. Those who pioneered a new fate.'

Hana

Ichika

Sumire

This world has now changed because of me, and I have also changed because of this world.

A fate different from Dorim and Himari who newly bloomed in the changed world.

A testament showing we have gone much further than the previous world.

A testament showing we have completely parted ways with the fate of destruction.

'I have definitely changed the fate of this world.'

I was no longer a stranger to this world.

Realizing this, I fired a massive miraculous arrow towards the millions of greed approaching us.

Chapter 138 : Boundary Line (2)

Within the massive white trajectory advancing forward was contained the power of all the connections a girl had made and changed in this world.

The numerous dreams contained within shone so colorfully and brilliantly that even the power of [Greed], which could usurp even the authority wielded by the gods, could not approach them.

White

Red

Yellow

Green

Lavender

The lights of fate shining so brightly were so nostalgic.

The fate of the world newly pioneered after breaking free from the embrace of stars and gods was so warm.

The armies of [Greed] and [Plague], following Erebos' orders, forgot even to advance towards the throne of nothingness and blankly reached out towards that light approaching to erase them.

[This is...]

Another Li Na, who had perished once but advanced again surrounded by pale black energy, saw an unbelievable sight within that light. She saw the figure of 'Li Na' living in the changed world.

A scene shown by lavender starlight.

A warm home. Friends' laughter.

The sight of herself sitting at the dining table alongside friends she had once lost and the master who had given her strength.

-Puhahaha!! Kaede, you can't even use chopsticks properly?

-Nyuhuhuh!! How embarrassing at your age!!

-S-Shut up. Be quiet before I get 'jealous'.

-Pfft...

-Ah, Miss.

-Whoa, it's the first time I've seen Boss laugh during a meal!

An ordinary everyday life.

An ordinary peace.

But to the dead who had lived in a world facing destruction, it was a light they had desperately longed for more than anything.

The warmth that the illusion, which had risen again as a delusion borrowing the body of an apostle, tried to steal.

[Ah...]

The fake Li Na tried to grasp it in a daze. But to her dirty and cold self, that light was hotter than the sun, and her body was melting away.

It was a light not permitted to the dead who had reversed fate, tainted by the fate of destruction and fallen into the quiet swamp of death, only to rise again leaving just memories.

Fssss...

A body slowly scattering, leaving behind not khaki starlight but black fragments.

She had 'Li Na's' memories, but she was a different person from the

girl in that beautiful scene.

[...]

Though she should rise again following Erebos' orders and advance towards the throne of nothingness even at the cost of sacrificing her body. Somehow she felt like staying in that light a bit longer, and ended up refusing to be reborn again.

-Hahaha!

-S-Stop laughing!

-Puhehe.

[Army of Greed, rise again!! The throne of nothingness is right ahead!! Divide!! Multiply!!]

'Just a little longer.'

Before she knew it, the girls who had finished breakfast had gone to their rooms to do their own things, and Li Na in a hoodie approached Sumire and Kaede, who were leaving for work even on the weekend, with a grin.

-Boss! Let's go to work together today.

-Sounds good, Li Na.

-Hehe, isn't it nice going together like this?

-Of course, we're friends after all.

'Just a little longer.'

[Army of... eed!! Do not be... luded...!!]

'I want to see a little more.'

Not to steal, but just to see like this.

It's too beautiful a scene to grasp in my hands.

'Just like this...'

Fssss...

Fssss...

And so, one by one, one by one, erasing the disappearing armies of [Greed], the white trajectory advanced towards Erebos hidden within the wave made of countless magical girls.

Fssss...

Fssss...

The stains of greed that seemed like they would regenerate forever were slowly melting away in the warmth of dreams. Watching this, Erebos screamed as she felt the usurpation of divinity that had come within reach with her brilliant surprise attack slowly slipping away.

[Uwaaa!! No!! To be blocked like this after coming so far!!]

From the brilliant starlight swirling in the white trajectory, one green starlight broke off and reached the heart of a certain girl who couldn't escape from within Erebos' halo.

Laughter, friends.

In the heart of the girl who had only burned with fighting spirit in the world facing destruction, a warm everyday conversation was heard.

-Kyoko! This coffee tastes weird! It's sour!

-Eeek?! Boss! That's really high-class coffee, what are you saying!!

-Ichika, you have no taste!

-What did you say, Sato kiddo!

-Ow?!

Ichika casually sitting on a chair in an elegant cafe and Kyoko chatting cheerfully while wearing an apron. That scene seemed to

shine more brilliantly than herself desperately swinging her fists. She ended up quietly closing her eyes.

[...]

Fssss...

The hatred held by the armies of [Greed] and magical girls of [Plague], which seemed like it would burn forever, melted away helplessly under the warmth of the brilliantly shining world.

The magical girls who were emptier than anyone, more deficient than anyone, and thus weaker to being filled than anyone.

In the warmth shown by the changing fate of the world created by starlight, they were slowly disappearing, forgetting even their own curses.

"This can't be..."

Finally, what remained was Erebos who had fled down to the very bottom of the stairs. Though even the curse of division and multiplication placed on herself finally disappeared under the white miracle. But she couldn't be happy about it.

She had brought an army that could threaten even goddesses to overcome the curse, but because she had absorbed even their desires, she couldn't overcome the warmth of this world that shone brighter than those desperate dreams.

She had persuaded even the will of stars to gain power to overcome the goddesses, but had become a being that could not coexist with the people living in this world.

"..."

But it wasn't over yet.

The stairs created through the miracle drawn from chaos were still intact.

Erebos, finally left alone, decided to focus on just one obsession she

absolutely couldn't give up.

What she held in one pale hand was the memory of destruction drawn from the will of stars.

* * *

After exercising the world's miracle containing our dreams. I looked at the goddess of [Death] with only wavering remnants still remaining. Ridiculously, she was trembling in 'fear' before the overwhelming power we had shown.

I cannot attack the goddesses preparing some great curse inside the throne of nothingness, as I cannot receive help from the will of stars.

Yet she was afraid of me.

"I didn't particularly protect you."

[...]

"Whatever curse you're preparing in there, however much you try to interfere with us."

[...]

"We will overcome it all and live on."

[Are you the goddess of Beginning.]

"No, my alias is [Hope]."

I proudly declared to the goddess's avatar looking at us in a daze.

"A gentle lie illuminating tomorrow, and the beginning of today."

[...]

"I'm the magical girl who will change this world... the world 'we' live in, to the happiest fate."

[...Even so.]

We will return.

It seemed to sound like that's what she meant.

The goddess of [Death] had finally completely lost the right to interfere in this world, and was being rapidly expelled despite not being the main body but an avatar. Through this, I could discover one important fact.

'The power remaining to the three goddesses is feeble.'

A fallen god who had lost even the right to interfere with the world was just vast in the size of their authority.

The reason the three goddesses had such twisted hearts and used such vile methods was probably because even they themselves had become too weak to go against the fate of the world.

'Weak enough that the goddess of [Death] had to hurriedly descend in an avatar form just to stop one advancing 4-star magical girl...'

As I was thinking that.

"Leader...?!"

"Hikari-chan!! In front!!"

Erebos approached with a crazed smile. As she approached, wrapped in the source of all the curses of [Greed] and [Plague], the fully bloomed 3-star magical girls froze for a moment. Even my starlight momentarily fluctuated, repeating being stolen and pushed back.

'She intends to fight to the end.'

I charged at Erebos like that, swinging the white sickle. A white wave created by the flashing blade larger than a person. A chilling sharpness that seemed like it would cut even the soul the moment it touched rushed towards Erebos' body.

Schwing—!!

Erebos didn't avoid it, and her body was instantly cut in half.

Erebos with her soul, starlight, and even body shattered.

I was taken aback seeing that sight.

"What...?!"

"Just one thing."

What Erebos, with only her upper body remaining, was looking at was the goddess of [Death].

What rose to her one remaining hand was golden energy.

"It's enough if just one thing is achieved."

Erebos quietly muttered and fired that energy towards the throne of nothingness.

Golden energy advancing in a straight line.

The goddess of [Death], slowly disappearing in the reforming boundary, was shocked to see it.

[No!!!]

Faaaash—!!

"Kugh?!"

The golden memory advancing smoothly despite my white starlight and the attacks of the fully bloomed magical girls who had broken free from the shock. It finally seeped in and disappeared under the throne of nothingness right in front.

"Puhih, hehehe!! I sensed a... cough... familiar energy inside."

"What...?"

"Whatever you do... whatever you summon... the memory of destruction... will never help... the goddesses...!"

Erebos laughed like that while shedding tears.

"Curse... the goddesses... who cursed... us...!"

The final [Greed] disappearing while leaving black fragments.

Her ambition blocked so helplessly.

Throwing away everything, she tried to achieve just one thing.

The magical girl of [Greed] who tried to usurp this world.

What she staked everything to achieve was revenge.

The end of revenge.

The shadow of the goddess of [Death] and Erebos disappeared simultaneously.

"..."

-Notice from Elysion Observatory! The third trial has been defeated!

-Waaaaaah!!

The cheers of magical girls who had overcome difficult battles with demons could be heard over the radio, but.

We who had fought at the scene of the trial remained silent with an inexplicable uneasiness.

Chapter 139 : What Remains Unchanged (1)

September 6

Vast wilderness

Red sky

On a straight road cutting through, it was so barren that nothing could be seen except the boundary between sky and earth in the American West desert, where only tumbleweeds and eagles used to pass. Now, magical girls and giant horses were racing through.

Black demons and silver ships crossing the desolate desert.

■■■■■—!!

Gugugugugu—!!

Every time the horses with overwhelming sizes like skyscrapers built on four pillars took a step, vibrations could be heard hundreds of kilometers away. The continuous charge of these massive bodies that should have collapsed under their own weight was destruction itself just by existing.

A sandstorm arose with each step, and a giant canyon formed with each leap.

Baaaang—!!

The explosion of starlight restraining them

Along with a massive explosion fired by dozens of 2-star magical girls who had caught up riding silver ships, one of the giant horses that ate corpses collapsed. Unable to handle the force left by its own charge,

it was violently thrown several kilometers away.

Kuuuung—!

[One of the large demons has been defeated!]

"We got another one!! Just a few more to go!! Keep it up!!"

[Estimated time of arrival to populated areas is 6 minutes! Please hurry!]

"Already?!"

[Notice from the Magical Girl of Hope: I will instantly defeat the groups breaking through to the front, so please intercept the lagging groups from behind.]

"Understood!!"

"Don't worry!!"

The start of the fourth trial began with the demons' feeding.

Horses with eerie blue ghost fire flickering inside their black skeletons. They appeared above a small town in the California desert.

As soon as they came out of the rift, the horses ran to a cemetery in a town abandoned for decades and began to eat the skeletons of the dead.

Hundreds of skeletons disappeared into the horses' mouths with each swallow.

Crunch crunch

Munch munch

■■■■■—!!

It wasn't enough.

For the cursed demons that would normally be satisfied only after devouring tens of millions of living people, these mere remains were

utterly unsatisfying. So they began to charge towards the human realm indicated by the will of stars.

A mad charge with the desire to devour.

■■■■■—!!

The charge of calamity, which ordinary humans would fear to even face, began spreading terrifying malice.

-We can't let this happen!!

Silver ships quickly surrounded the four giant monsters that had run out from the town cemetery, but the demons that had inherited the characteristics of division and multiplication left by the Magical Girl of [Greed] broke through the encirclement and fled.

If they survive clumsily, they resurrect as two.

-Notice from the Magical Girl of [Hope]! The demons of this trial divide and recover like the [Plague] and [Greed] we faced before! Please concentrate firepower to defeat them in one go!

The horses that would normally charge while tearing at the flesh of living people ran towards the direction indicated by the will of stars. The chase that had begun in the middle of the desert was now advancing towards a small city.

Swoooosh—!!

A yellow meteor passed by silver ships moving at continental-crossing speeds.

A small girl wrapped in starlight.

Thousands of stars scattered across the red sky poured out from her all at once, fired towards the middle group running far ahead.

A curtain made of the Milky Way.

Yellow star clusters engraved on the desert shone brilliantly following the black horses, covering their hideous appearance with beautiful

starlight. Decomposing from the yellow starlight slowly invading their black bodies, the black horses were finally forced to stop their charge.

Pabababababat!

"We hit them!!"

[The second group has been defeated!! The last third group is advancing 200km ahead!!]

"I'll run ahead!! Like a meteor!!"

[Yes!! I'm counting on you! Magical Girl of Meteor!!]

"Of course! I'm the fastest magical girl after all!!"

Faaaash—!!

Hana answered confidently, wrapped in light like her nickname, and crossed the red sky that had risen over the California desert like a meteor.

Meteor.

A nickname given by magical girls because of her brilliant appearance, rather than her real aliases [Swiftness] and [Friendship].

A small girl who deals with numerous demons and shares dreams and smiles with people.

Though the youngest among all magical girls, there were none who did not respect her.

Just like the confidence Hana had shown so far.

The fourth trial was completely cleared by the Milky Way scattered by the yellow meteor in front of the city guarded by [Hope] and [Love].

[Notice from Elysion Observatory! The trial demons have been completely defeated!]

* * *

The midday chase that took place in the hot desert.

After that tremendous battle had passed, Yuki and I returned to Elysion and sat on a bench overlooking the beach.

-Mister! More spicy chicken stew please!

-Me too, another plate!

-Today was amazing, wasn't it?

-Yeah! I've never felt my heart race like this before!

Elysion, passing through the coast of the western United States, was filled with joyful cheers from magical girls and ordinary people.

Delicious food and girls' smiles rose like lanterns illuminating the city of magical girls, and girls who couldn't come to Elysion climbed up the threads of fate to enjoy the atmosphere in the plaza that only magical girls could enter.

Magical girls always return victorious from the continuing massive battles.

Ordinary citizens rest on this island cheering for their brilliance.

The human world gradually advanced towards a future of dreams and hope thanks to magical girls.

'It's really hopeful.'

A scene that seemed to paint the word hope.

Yet we couldn't join in and rejoice together.

"..."

"..."

The fourth trial, defeated more favorably and easily than ever before.

The magical girls felt the joy of continuing overwhelming victories. As soon as they returned to Elysion from California, they held a feast late into the night, boasting about their exploits in today's battle while enjoying delicious food and cheerful songs.

-Hahaha! And then Sato-san appeared from far away going swoosh!! And flash!

-She really is fast, that kid...

-It's hard to believe she's actually the most senior, having been active as a magical girl since last summer.

-She has a bright personality, amazing abilities, and lots of fans too.

The magical city built on Elysion, which used to be a quiet island with nothing, went from being a somewhat lively town to a place full of energy reminiscent of a daily festival. We were recalling today's events on the beach where the lights could be faintly seen.

"It was the same."

"Yeah."

"It's strange."

"Yeah."

Tuk

A small hand landed on mine.

I grasped it, and felt uneasiness in that warmth.

We understood each other's intended words so well that our conversation might seem contextless to others by now. But I thought it was better for just us to carry this anxiety, at least regarding these conversations.

'Actually, the fully bloomed magical girls and representatives of self-governing bodies who know about the destroyed world probably feel it too.'

The third trial where the Magical Girl of [Greed] and the goddess of [Death] appeared.

Since then, no anomalies like interference from the three goddesses or fake magical girls had been detected.

Black lion

Black snake

Black boar

Black horse

The demons that still occasionally popped out through small rifts from the wounds of stars remained the same, but the demons melting under the starlight of magical girls were no longer objects of fear and terror.

Gradually growing confidence through continuing battles, and familiarity that prevents losing oneself. Because of these, the world where humans live had not collapsed so far, having passed the midpoint of the trials.

'I thought the three goddesses would definitely place a curse during the fourth trial.'

The trial demons that simply appeared from quietly opened rifts, and the trial proceeding exactly as Yuki originally knew. A trial proceeding without any changes was itself an anomaly to us.

Because I appeared.

Because it changed because of me.

It shouldn't have been unchanged.

"This world has changed, but."

Why are the trials no longer changing?

Why are the goddesses no longer interfering?

"...Is it because of Erebos?"

"Probably."

Some great ritual the goddesses were preparing.

But Erebos commented that it was an energy familiar to her, and threw the memory of destruction into the throne of nothingness. And the goddess of [Death] truly despaired seeing that sight.

'What on earth happened in the throne of nothingness?'

As if reading my thoughts, Yuki also muttered.

"What could be in there?"

"..."

We didn't know.

That's why we couldn't rejoice even amidst the overwhelming victory in the trial.

We were rather more anxious in a world progressing as we knew.

The only fact we could know now was that some distortion had clearly occurred somewhere beyond our perception.

Chapter 140 : What Remains Unchanged (2)

September 8

The village below Elysion's lighthouse. Originally the only place on this island where nothing existed where golden girls gathered to live, it has now become an open space at the very center of the expanding magical city due to people gathering on the land of giant magical girls flying through the sky.

"Wow! This house is still here!"

"Oh my goodness! It's exactly the same!"

"..."

The original village, now left as a kind of tourist attraction, as the golden magical girls now stay at shops set up by their close friends or in the tent village frequented by Hikari, the successor of the goddess. There, houses made of dazzling white bricks were clustered together, facing a circular statue honoring the goddess of [Beginning].

"Nayeon! Come here!"

"You're finally on vacation, cheer up a bit!"

"Haah."

Originally, people visiting Elysion went to see the central plaza and downtown, so visitors to this place were very rare. A middle-aged couple and a girl in military uniform were walking down a quiet street where only the sound of passing strollers echoed.

And they stopped to look at a certain house.

The house they stopped at was a bleak space with a bed for two adults and an old table. Though dust had settled and it no longer felt lived in, traces left by the middle-aged couple who had resided there were clearly still alive and breathing.

"We lived here for 2 years! Hahaha! It's nice to see this cabin after so long."

"Oh my, when we first came here. How uncertain everything was, but now seeing it again makes me want to cry with nostalgia."

"Hmm."

"Look here! Nayeon! Come and see! These scratches are from when Dad was counting the days missing you."

"There aren't many?"

"...I forgot how many days it had been partway through and gave up."

Captain Hong, who had become younger-looking than his peers due to accumulating the goddess's blessing in his body from long-term stay on the island, sheepishly pushed back his hair that had completely fallen out and then regrown abundantly.

"Dad, aren't you pushing your hair back too often lately? You keep doing it every time you speak."

"Haha, you don't know how precious this sensation is."

"By the way, doesn't the White Wing Unit have hair regulations? How long are you going to keep that messy blue dye!"

Nayeon stuck out her tongue at her mother's nagging and quickly covered her two-tone dyed short hair with her military-issued cap. Mrs. Kim looked at it disapprovingly for a moment before focusing again on the house in front of her. There were no longer any wrinkles around her eyes trembling with nostalgia.

Nayeon felt that her parents' side profiles looked both unfamiliar and nostalgic.

'They really suddenly got younger, it's like looking at different people.'

The blessing bestowed on this land by the goddess of [Beginning].

The remnants of the final blessing representing the golden age of immortality were now slowly disappearing.

'To think this used to be normal in the old days...'

Nayeon recalled the request of the strange white-haired girl who insisted she wasn't a goddess while having a halo, using miracles, and boasting a body like a Greek statue.

-For the human era to continue, this is something that must disappear naturally. So please help prevent unnecessary misunderstandings among others, okay?

Because the miracle experienced by Captain Hong's couple was only possible during a time when there were few people staying on the island. Hikari didn't want to widely publicize this fact, and Nayeon's family also agreed, not wanting to get entangled in others' attention anymore.

"Oh my, there's nothing left in Busan anyway, should we just come back here to live?"

"Ohoho! Should we? It was so nice to see Iris after a long time too."

"...I, I like Busan."

"Since when did this kid have hometown pride."

"As a soldier of the Republic of Korea Army, I have endless pride in residing in the Republic of Korea..."

"Puhahahahaha!! Nayeon! The Soldier's Creed!"

"Our resolve!!"

Clap—!

Father and daughter shared a high-five filled with mutual understanding.

For Captain Hong, who had gradually grown distant from his daughter as she entered puberty, to share this kind of understanding again. He was just so happy with the current reality.

During the past few months since returning to Busan after drifting to Elysion, Captain Hong and Mrs. Kim were satisfied just with their daughter being alive and well. So they settled all the commotion by just filing legal suits against the union members and villagers who had extorted their property.

Of course, there were minor incidents like passing Nayeon's whereabouts to American headhunters or getting into fistfights with those who had picked fights with their daughter.

-Still, it's something that she didn't run out with a sickle. Our Mrs. Kim has really calmed down a lot.

-Mom, were you like that in the past?

-No, I hid the sickle.

-Huh...

As Nayeon was recalling these incidents from over half a year ago.

"Nayeon."

"Yeah?"

Captain Hong put his arm around his daughter's shoulders with a truly proud smile, not a playful one.

"Protecting people. It's hard, isn't it?"

"..."

Well.

Was it hard?

When she received training from Lee Minseul, the Magical Girl of [Shooting], to the point of vomiting,

When ordered to defend Busan while a tremendous battle was taking place in Japan,

When fighting in Europe with unfamiliar magical girls to defeat the sea serpent.

'It wasn't hard.'

Though she had seen many incredible battles where she thought she might die.

Though she was called out whenever rifts appeared over the sea.

Though she grumbled with a duck face every time she was called out, making Minseul laugh.

But the moment she put on the blue dress and raced across the sea to save people, she didn't feel it was hard.

-Thank you!! Magical Girl of [Sea]!!

-You're so cool!! Blue suits you!!

-The platoon leader is awesome, sir.

-See, I told you.

Ah, that's what Minseul said during training.

"Magical girls are beings who strive to protect people, so it's not hard at all."

She thought it was meant to tease her when running laps.

But now she understood.

That brilliantly shining feeling in her heart.

Mrs. Kim and Captain Hong burst into hearty laughter as soon as they heard those words.

"Really?"

"Yeah."

"Our daughter. You're the best."

"Didn't you know?"

"No, I knew."

Nayeon laughed like that again and slightly regretted.

That day when the silver-haired girl suddenly came.

'I should have just opened the door then.'

She regretted only now realizing that saving people like this was such a thrilling thing, not being dragged into the military.

That emotion was something the girl in some destroyed world hadn't realized, as she defended the gradually shrinking human domain while thinking she was just guarding a place for her parents to return to, ignoring the voices of outsiders.

"I want to protect."

As Nayeon's blue glass star emitted a quiet light, she began walking towards a fate different from the one set by the goddess of [Beginning].

It wasn't some dramatic change in an individual, but it was a truly massive change in the world.

In a conversation shared by an ordinary family, the fate of the stars moving forward took one more step towards somewhere. It was one of the massive changes in fate that even Hikari, even Yuki, didn't know about.

The direction of stars shining more brilliantly than the dazzling white star.

It was a change in the universe.

* * *

"Kohane."

"Yes? What is it, Boss?"

Kohane, who was assembling a plastic model in her room, scratched her wide forehead with nippers and looked at Sumire who had entered with a pale face.

"Do you have something you want me to do? Nyuhuhu. I was just about to start on this awesome new armored..."

"We found them."

"...What?"

Sumire often came to her with a serious face, but this time was different.

Though she didn't understand what she meant.

Kohane suddenly realized what Sumire was trying to say.

Clatter

Clatter

The nippers in her hand shook, making a sound.

Tears were forming in the corners of her eyes that had been smiling mischievously.

Kohane's weak side that she rarely showed even to her friends, the wound that everyone shared and thus never touched, burst open again, bringing pain to her heart.

"Kohane's family... your brother."

"B-Brother."

"He was... using an alias in Southeast Asia."

"Brother."

"It's... a difficult situation to discuss in detail. I think you need to come."

"W-What do you mean."

Timid

Fat

Naive to a fault.

The otaku brother who always put her small self on his knee and watched mecha anime together.

The clumsy brother who helped her live confidently by making her empathize with pilots riding giant robots so that her small self wouldn't feel discouraged.

Why on earth would the foolish brother, naive enough to be deceived by women in cosplay bars, suddenly be using an alias in Southeast Asia?

What kind of state must he be in for the boss, who had been through everything, to be so restless?

All sorts of ominous imaginings flooded into the quick-thinking Kohane's mind.

Thud

The head of the plastic model armor that Kohane dropped in shock hit the floor and cracked.

"..."

-The highlight of armored plastic models is the horns!

-Nyuhuhuhut!! That's right!!

"Brother."

The horns of the plastic model were broken.

Chapter 141 : What Remains Unchanged (3)

Inside the hospital room with windows closed to avoid the late summer heat, only the sound of an old air conditioner running and the voices of two siblings could be heard quietly.

Kohane called her brother again in a low voice.

"Assistant."

"Dududu..."

A man in his late 20s sitting on a white bed wearing a patient's gown. He remained trapped in his own world, not responding to his sister's call even after reuniting for the first time in 6 years.

"..."

Skinny fingers.

Trembling eyes.

Drool dripping from his mouth.

Scars visible under the patient's gown.

Even this was said to be much improved after Kaede, who had brought the man, used healing magic.

"Dududu."

Two fingers that didn't bend well due to tendons cut during abuse had transformed into magnificent-looking armor in the man's mind.

"Dudududu."

In the man's mind, a grand space war had been continuing for 6 years.

Numerous armored suits, numerous villains, he had become a pilot fiercely surviving among them.

An ace pilot of the Earth Federation, separated from his precious little sister due to the schemes of the evil Mars Empire. His entire body's organs had been replaced with enhancement parts. He continued his adventures through numerous missions, from scorching lands to the cold of space.

"Swoosh swoosh! Bang!"

Kohane's brother, Daichi, continued the delusion that had protected him from 6 years of harsh abuse and violence, not even realizing his precious little sister was right beside him.

"Vroom... Whoosh... Bang!"

"Assistant."

"Dududu."

"..."

Where they found Kohane's brother who had disappeared after Sumire was taken by yakuza. They were able to locate him because he was accidentally caught as an extra in a remote travel introduction program filmed last year.

A remote travel broadcast that had been delayed in airing until recently due to having to match trends after the appearance of magical girls.

A slave living and eating on the streets.

The village idiot.

That's how Daichi was introduced by the people of the remote village.

There was little that could be inferred from Daichi's completely changed appearance in the broadcast, but Sumire had sent Kaede after sensing something from his occasional Japanese utterances and brief conversations where he called himself "Dada".

When they found Daichi, his health condition was barely at a level of just being alive.

Several missing organs.

Teeth and nails fallen out from malnutrition.

Drugs injected through reckless surgeries.

A broken mind from living as a slave.

The wounds carved into Daichi's body and mind were permanent damage impossible to fully heal even with the miracles of magical girls.

-I asked magical girls with healing abilities as their unique skills too, but... I'm sorry.

-No, thank you. Boss.

After a life of slavery moving between countries and long-term abuse, he had forgotten even his own name and was living as an idiot named "Dada" in the remote village.

6 years ago.

A cosplay bar he entered by chance after being enchanted by a clerk on the street. After spending a stimulating night with a bar girl he met there for the first time, Daichi was seduced by the promise that he could become a real lover, not just a bar girl, if he paid a ransom.

Enchanted by the first woman's body he had experienced and the bar's sultry atmosphere, Daichi knocked on the door of a loan shark to get a loan, and his whereabouts were cut off there.

Daichi's hell began then.

Kohane's hell also began then.

"Dudu! Swoosh swoosh."

"..."

Kohane was shocked to see her brother, who had once had a dull and innocent impression like tofu, changed to be so gaunt. The dull but kind light that used to rise in his eyes above his slow gaze had changed to be like that of a dead fish.

-Assistant! Lose some weight! Isn't this house too small for just the two of us?

-S-Sorry Kohane.

Several scar marks were visible on his stomach under the patient's gown, and parts that should clearly have existed were unnaturally sunken in.

She had told him to lose weight, but not to change like this.

"..."

Probably the foolish brother didn't tell anyone about himself even when borrowing money from loan sharks and starting to pay it back through slave labor.

If he had, terrifying loan sharks would have barged into the house where Kohane was left alone, and tried to sell off the small elementary school student Kohane somewhere.

A foolish mistake.

The brother who bore all his mistakes himself as a final responsibility returned completely broken.

A cold house

A hardened lunchbox

Child protection center

The plaza in Kabukicho.

The day her brother went out with the foolish excuse of going for a walk near Kabukicho.

Everything fell apart from the day young Kohane opened the door and stepped out while clutching her hungry stomach.

"Ha..."

Kohane's mind was filled with darkness beyond despair. All the pain she had experienced in her life mixed together like dough into a gloomy and painful darkness.

How easily a human life can be broken.

A single night's mistake

Because of that, the young man whose joy was working part-time jobs and watching late-night robot anime with his little sister returned as an idiot unable to even say his own name.

Because of that, the girl whose dream was to run a plastic model shop and make the coolest dioramas clung to streets her brother wasn't even in and searched for him.

"..."

Kohane felt herself becoming numb and cold due to the devastation and despair that had passed a critical point. At the same time, the battle in the man's mind as he played with his two fingers ended.

The right finger standing proudly, the left finger slowly bending.

"Swoosh! Spot!"

"..."

Had her brother defeated his opponent with a beam blade by moving the imaginary armor?

As Kohane watched her brother's madness in despair, Daichi

muttered with unfocused eyes towards his slowly bending finger.

"Ko... hane... Doc, Doc... tor... F-Free..."

"Brother...? Do you remember my name?"

"F-Free... Free her... Villain...!"

"..."

"I... I... will... re... turn..."

"..."

"Doc... tor's... lab..."

My foolish brother was fighting in his delusion to save me.

He was fighting to return home, to regain himself.

Kohane found it so foolish that tears came to her eyes.

"You foolish assistant, why do you realize the important things only now...!"

If daily life was so precious, he shouldn't have been enchanted by a woman.

If he wanted to see her so much, he shouldn't have gone to the bar.

"Why do you make such foolish mistakes!!"

Kohane stood up and screamed.

The chair rolled on the floor, pushed by her movement.

Crash!

Even in the space where the chair rolled and the girl screamed, the man couldn't escape from his delusion.

What use is the heart left in our lives that have already been twisted and broken as much as they can be?

A frail, skinny high school girl and a man who had become an idiot.

Even without parents, that daily life of happily watching late-night anime in a small room and going out to buy plastic models on weekends can't return.

Even if we find our family, that time will never come back.

Clatter

The head of the plastic model armor that Kohane had hastily packed and brought from her room rolled out of her pocket as she suddenly stood up.

Broken horns.

No matter how cool a body you complete, if a small part is broken, it loses meaning as a plastic model.

Because that's the antenna where the pilot receives the most important information.

Because it's the coolest part that makes an armor suit what it is.

"...Horns."

Daichi picked it up blankly.

For the first time, her brother recognized his surroundings.

"Assistant...? B-Brother?! Are you conscious?! Can you answer?!"

"The horns..."

Are broken.

This plastic model can no longer become a cool finished product.

"I-If it's broken... di... di... di..."

"Diorama...?"

Kohane understood the madman's mutterings.

It was a memory from the past.

A sudden earthquake.

Returning from the shelter to find all the plastic models broken.

-Ugh, Assistant, this is terrible! The plastic models are all broken because of the earthquake.

-Hmm... then shall we make a diorama?

Daichi suddenly took the protagonist's and rival's mecha and started burning scratches with a lighter. Kohane was shocked to see her brother ruining the two models that were still relatively intact.

-Whoa?! What are you doing?! Are you crazy?!

-Here, look. If we do this like this...

Daichi recreated the scene from the anime's final episode where the two mechs fight fiercely with beam blades drawn. And he arranged the debris of other broken models around them.

The final battlefield

Amidst broken mechs, two figures face off in a final battle as everyone watches.

A vividness as if it had come to life from the anime.

Kohane felt the diorama made in a crude cardboard box was so cool.

-W-Wow!

-Cool, right?

-Nyu-huhu! Not bad, Assistant!

-A perfect plastic model is nice, but.

A vivid diorama is cool even if it's broken.

Because a living, breathing story bursts out of it fiercely.

Like a battered diorama.

Our story is twisted and scarred, but.

We are still alive and breathing.

Our story continues fiercely, though imperfect.

There is a story contained because it's not perfect.

"...Yeah."

Kohane rubbed her eyes and hugged Daichi, who was blankly holding the plastic model head.

The visiting hours before Daichi is admitted to the psychiatric hospital are coming to an end.

"...You must stay strong, Assistant."

"..."

"You ride your armor."

"..."

"I'll ride my armor."

"..."

"From now on, we'll overcome the Mars Empire."

"..."

"We'll create our own cool diorama."

A fate beyond finding family was born and shone brightly in Kohane's ivory glass star.

And so another girl with a new star of fate was added.

The world takes another step forward.

"Brother."

Before going out to the hallway where her friends were waiting, Kohane looked at her brother sitting blankly one last time.

"I'll come again."

The door to the hospital room closed quietly.

Click

"..."

The Earth Federation's ace pilot shed tears at the sadness felt after a fierce but fruitless battle. Victory that had seemed within reach slipped away once again, and the face of his little sister waiting in his hometown became hazy.

"..."

Why is it?

Defeat is familiar, but.

Why does this defeat feel especially sad?

The plastic model head with broken horns was placed on the control stick.

The ace pilot clutched it and cried blankly for a long time.

Chapter 142 : What Remains Unchanged (4)

September 12

"Hecate, what are you doing there?"

"...I'm playing."

"No, I mean why are you setting up a parasol in the empty lot and playing games on a blanket?"

"E-Even the Successor shouldn't criticize others' hobbies... even the goddess doesn't interfere with hobbies."

"Are you using that speech pattern to annoy me?"

"The primordial language directly conveys emotions too... so that's why."

"..."

Ever since clearing up the awkwardness between me and Yuki, Hecate would often do ridiculous things like this. Perhaps it could be called excessively honest and spontaneous behavior towards herself.

'The more ridiculous thing is that she's not trying to be funny.'

It had been several months since Hecate started interacting with various magical girls to learn about her own life beyond the orders left by the goddess of [Beginning].

-Successor, then I'll be off to the exchange meeting.

-Where are you going?

-Korea this time.

-Be honest. You're going to an internet cafe, right?

-T-That's... not a bad thing, is it?

Hecate, who had been establishing her own humanity through interactions with many people, became an excellent game addict. Sometimes it was even impressive how she enjoyed games in such diverse ways.

"According to the movement of the stars, today there's a sign of big success..."

Even now, she had been enjoying games on a handheld console for over 6 hours under the parasol, and a collectible card game was running on the smartphone set up beside her.

Swipe

Rattle

"Ah... it doesn't come out well when I draw with a single pull."

Tap

Tap

Tap

Tap

Tap

Tap

Tap

Tap

Tap

"...Trash game."

While conscious of me, Hecate fiddled with her smartphone whenever she had a chance. Sometimes she even held the game console and smartphone in both hands, alternating between them. Though it was somewhat cute because it was a beautiful girl doing it, it was still quite an ugly sight.

'She's not some elementary schooler in a dopamine overdose state.'

If she added a tablet and turned on a video streaming site, she would become a perfect dystopian dopamine-addicted girl soaked in pleasure. Imagining Hecate using internet memes and broadcast terms in her head made me dizzy for a moment.

'Dorim, who uses the internet a lot, actually doesn't use internet memes. But Hecate seems like she'd be immediately influenced.'

Because she was a noble pure white, Hecate absorbed colors faster than anyone.

Whether as compensation psychology for having worked for a long time, Hecate couldn't escape from games that gave her the most instant pleasure.

-These days, Miss Hecate doesn't even look at the movement of stars after dealing with demons, she just returns to the lighthouse right away.

-She says there's no use looking since fate has been twisted anyway...

According to the testimony of the golden girls, on her days off she spends almost every day playing games until 4 AM, waking up past noon, then playing games again until 4 AM.

"W-What is it?"

"..."

Red eyes glancing at me nervously. Numerous emotions were still slowly rising in them.

Anxiety

Impatience

Tension

If on the day I first met her they were like the glass eyes of a doll, now they were the eyes of an ordinary girl worried about having her game console taken away.

As much happiness that arises, greed and obsession also arise, and fear and irritation to protect them also arise.

It could be seen as a process of explosively embodying the knowledge and experiences already accumulated in her head through interactions with girls.

"You've changed a lot."

"W-What do you mean?"

"You've become more human."

"..."

Hecate put down her game console for a moment and showed a shy expression after hearing my words. That expression too was the manifestation of a new emotion arising from realizing that her current self was being slovenly.

Not a perfect doll that is:

Flawless, noble, and serene.

But an imperfect human who is:

Lacking, desperate, and intense.

"Still, I didn't expect Hecate, who always talked about missions and orders, to change so dramatically."

"...Even I didn't know I had such pleasure-seeking and shy aspects to myself."

"You were shy from the beginning, pretending to be solemn to keep people from approaching."

"W-What's wrong with being... introverted?"

"I'm not criticizing."

"T-The Successor... seems to have a tendency to insist on not interfering as long as the basics are kept."

"Hehe."

A warm breeze blew into the open space of Elysion where we were standing. But the scent of summer mixed in the wind was diminishing compared to yesterday.

As much as time passed, humanity was also enduring the trials.

The outside world only praised me who had foreseen all of this, and cheered for the brilliance of the magical girls saving the world from demons.

'Even that has become more familiar than excitement after more than a year since magical girls appeared.'

Most of the sick are healed by magical girls, and the terrifying demons are defeated by magical girls. People cheer for them who strive only to protect people, and talk matter-of-factly about what will happen after overcoming the trials.

This world was already facing tomorrow.

This world already had hope.

Then after overcoming all the trials.

Wouldn't it be natural for the Magical Girl of [Hope] to quietly step aside?

"Hecate."

Hecate responded to my serious voice, quietly turned off her game console, and looked at me solemnly.

Mechanical and strange, but Hecate who had kept me from drifting

away somewhere since the first day I came to this world. I felt bad about entrusting another heavy burden to the girl who had already fulfilled her mission sufficiently.

"I have a request."

"I'm listening."

"After overcoming all the trials, if humanity overcomes even the three goddesses and the stars..."

"..."

"...Please help Yuki lead the magical girls."

"Yuki?"

"I merely reign with the authority passed on by the goddess of [Beginning] and overflowing infinite power, I have nothing more to teach magical girls beyond facing tomorrow."

"..."

"Please help Yuki lead Elysion and the magical girls well even after I'm gone."

"Why Yuki?"

"...Because Yuki was the only one who taught the spirit of magical girls in an era of despair where there was nothing."

"I see."

Hecate closed her eyes for a moment and nodded with difficulty.

Not obedience, but permission.

Those few seconds it took to answer indicated that Hecate and my relationship had already changed. She didn't obey, but considered and gave permission as my companion.

Hecate's attitude had changed,

My role had changed,

Our relationship had changed.

To change is to move forward.

That's how we were moving forward.

"I understand."

"Thank you."

"Where do you plan to go after the trials end?"

"To my original world."

"You're thinking of returning?"

"Yes."

I am an outsider who flowed in from death by the goddess of [Beginning]. Even if this place has become my second home, my journey will end by finding my mother again.

As long as the soul of the man named Shim Hyun-woo lives and breathes within Shirogane Hikari. If I were to ignore that, I would no longer be able to exist as myself. That's why I must leave once they escape from their unreasonable fate.

"Even if the Successor's heart changes and you decide to stay, I will always respect the Successor."

"Why? I'm not omnipotent like a god, and I wasn't originally destined to be a magical girl."

"Because I believe in Hikari who is neither god nor magical girl."

"..."

"Not because of the goddess's orders, but because I believe in everything I've seen."

"..."

Hecate believed in me not as a apostle and messenger, but as a companion.

The belief she sent was the same, but the basis of that belief had changed.

As Hecate finished speaking, the silver-white glass star placed under the white blanket on the ground glowed softly.

The fate of humans who have escaped from this star's great flow.

It wasn't as beautiful as the moment of blooming.

It wasn't as sublime as the moment of full bloom.

Just a subtle change.

Not a girl who only follows the voice of god, but a girl who watches and believes in everything including god.

Magical Girl of [Faith].

"Fate has changed."

"It has. Hecate's fate..."

"No."

Hecate quietly raised her head and looked at the sky beyond the parasol. I also looked up at the blue sky following her.

"..."

Though starlight was hard to see in the midday sky obscured by the sun, through divinity I could feel the positions of the stars slowly changing in the sky.

The sky that always pointed only to the fate of destruction.

The fate of this world had changed.

It was changing towards uncertain possibilities rather than confirmed destruction.

"..."

Not as a growing sprout, but as extending branches.

This world was changing on its own, leaving my hands.

In the changing fate, magical girls were running towards wider and infinite possibilities.

* * *

October 6

[Notice from Elysion Observatory!! The fifth trial has been defeated!!]

[The red atmosphere will soon... soon...?]

[Huh?! It's not... not changing!! Emergency situation!!]

It didn't change.

Though we drove away the birds scattering plague through ominous wings.

The sky didn't turn blue again, and demons kept popping out of endlessly opening rifts.

[Demons keep coming out!! Everyone please go to the expected areas!!]

[It's an emergency situation where the rifts keep not closing!!]

We continued fighting until winter when the coldest chill arrives.

Something was going wrong.

Chapter 143 : Call of the Stars (1)

December 21

For two months, the sky had not returned.

Even after the day of trials passed, the dragon of destruction had not appeared.

Darkness and red spread calmly like the twilight just before night falls.

"..."

While the sky burns red, the cold felt on the cheeks is terrifyingly chilly.

The coldest winter ever due to the midday sun that hadn't come for a while.

No.

Perhaps it's not just because of the cold.

The fear that what we've been doing might be meaningless.

The anxiety that everything might be on the extension of fate.

Numerous thoughts rose in my heart, making my fingertips cold.

Even now, I could almost hear the sighs of people evacuating to Elysion to escape the demons. Those sighs were so heavy that I ended up shrinking back.

Still, I had to remain composed in front of people.

I had to act calm as if I knew everything.

Because I am [Hope].

"Hikari."

"...Yuki."

"I dealt with as many as I could for now."

"Yeah. Thank you."

Turning my eyes from the red sky, I saw Yuki's pure white figure, who hadn't released her transformation for days.

White flame gently warming the surroundings.

As she approached, it felt like some warmth returned to my heart that had grown cold with anxiety.

"..."

"...What is it?"

Even with the power of fully bloomed 3-star, the traces of fatigue under her eyes didn't disappear. Yuki, who had squeezed out her power to the limit and remained transformed, was relatively energetic compared to other magical girls fighting while taking short naps on fate threads or ships.

I couldn't move from watching over the place where the dragon of destruction would appear, so I entrusted all battles to Galatea and the magical girls. I offered to help directly because I felt sorry for them overexerting themselves, but I was refused because everything would be meaningless if we couldn't stop the dragon of destruction.

The magical girls smiled at me and asked me to believe in them.

Still, feeling sorry about that, I placed my hand on Yuki's cheek.

It was cold.

Yuki also didn't know much about this situation.

She was anxious too.

"..."

We were just protecting people from approaching demons without knowing anything, and breathing miracles into the world of people that was breaking down.

Smiling and pretending everything was fine like fools who knew nothing.

We shouted that we were winning in a situation that anyone could see was unreasonable.

We became fools in endless uncertainty.

Because it felt like we couldn't move a single step if we didn't advance like fools.

We just smiled and said everything was fine.

"I'm sorry."

"...For what?"

"Just because."

"..."

In fact, for the past two months, except for occasional naps or rest times, most magical girls have been constantly traveling around the world while transformed. Small rifts that would normally open once or twice a week are now opening in dozens or hundreds of places around the world.

Endlessly surging demons.

The sun that doesn't rise.

Dried up crops.

The word destruction no longer needed to be spoken.

Because everyone was already thinking of it in a corner of their minds.

As if it would become reality the moment it was uttered.

Despair.

We who had climbed to the highest peak of joy were recalling that word faster than anyone.

Predetermined fate approaches so unreasonably and suddenly...

How had Yuki fought in such unreasonableness?

"Aren't you tired?"

"...It is a bit hard. Someone keeps trying to shoulder everything alone."

"..."

"It's okay."

"...Ah."

"You don't have to be anxious alone. We're together."

"Yeah."

"What you've been doing isn't meaningless."

"...Yeah."

A gentle lie.

Yuki slowly took my hand and kissed the back of it.

Her soft short hair fell like a curtain as she bowed her head, and in the secret space under her hair, burning warmth engraved a promise on the back of my hand.

A short but intense heat.

A fierce but gentle softness.

It looked so much like a noble vow.

I couldn't take my eyes off for a moment.

After an eternal instant, her lips that had left a warmth like a brand curved into a smile.

"Thanks to you, I was able to come back this far."

"Is that so... I'm glad if you think that way."

"Thanks to you, I was able to grow."

"Yuki was always a strong person. You just didn't have a chance to look back at yourself."

"You gave me that chance."

Though she tried to smile calmly, an unmistakable trembling could be seen in the corners of her eyes.

'Ah.'

Somehow Yuki's face seemed to have changed to be like mine.

We may have met in some fate and walked together cherishing each other because of our similarities.

The protagonist in the story and I have finally come to know each other this far.

"We'll be okay... I'm okay."

"Yeah."

"So if everything ends well... don't worry and you can leave."

"Huh...?"

I couldn't help but freeze at those words.

Seeing my expression, Yuki chuckled happily.

"You... knew?"

"Yeah. Anyone could see you were acting like someone about to leave for somewhere. Not keeping anything in your room, being indifferent to anything not necessary for outside work, acting as if you naturally wouldn't be here after the trials end."

"..."

"Actually, everyone probably noticed to some extent."

Hana, Ichika, Sumire too...

"Then do you want to live here forever? I'll help you."

"...I'm sorry."

"Hehe, that's too bad."

"..."

Whether her words were a joke or not, she just kept smiling even at my refusal.

Suddenly I felt like I wouldn't be able to say it if not now.

For Yuki who was so devoted to me.

"I'll definitely come back."

"..."

"Even if I have to find a miracle again. I'll come back to this world."

Hearing those words, Yuki's face gradually contorted.

From her trembling fingertips, I could feel faint expectation and fear.

"...What about your world?"

"Though I kept denying it, I've become close to a goddess, haven't I?"

"...No one believed you weren't a goddess though."

"Is that so?"

Taking care of my mother until the end, sorting out what I hadn't been able to, and finding a way to return. I'm not sure if I can find a way on Earth where the will of stars doesn't exist. But I will find it no matter what.

Even so, the time it takes will be at least...

"It might take 50 years... or more."

"I'll be a complete old lady then? Hehe."

"..."

"Then I'll lead the magical girls and protect this place."

"Yuki."

"I'll shine endlessly before people, and work hard enough to bloom divinity... the fourth star."

"..."

"I'll become the best magical girl that doesn't change no matter how old I get."

Yuki finally hugged me to hide the tears that burst out.

Yuki who was a span shorter than me who had become a woman.

The girl with short hair slightly split at the ends that was so impressive.

She who loved her father and loved the world.

So fragile and small.

Looking so precarious as if she might disappear somewhere if she shed tears.

I held her back so she wouldn't waver.

"I'll... definitely wait."

"Yeah."

"I'll wait for you who watched over me."

"I'll return to you who watched over me."

We promised each other like that under the cold red sky.

To meet again for sure.

* * *

In the destroyed world, everything had returned to chaos.

Only silence had settled.

Gods,

Humans,

The will of stars,

A star that had become quiet with everything returning to chaos.

An immeasurable time since destruction.

An era of nothingness where even the domains guarded by apostles indifferent to humanity had disappeared, even the will of stars had vanished, and only glass stars left behind by magical girls floated in chaos. In that era, a single glass star rose from chaos and gained its own personality.

The 10001st star that shouldn't have existed originally.

Not born from the goddess of [Beginning].

Chaos engraved on two starlights dropped by [Resurrection] as she crossed to another dimension.

A star of chaos created by gathering fragments of magical girls who split apart killing each other.

"..."

It existed alone without any memories or personality.

Just in solitude.

Just in nothingness.

Until the memory of destruction, merged with the goddesses' curses, flowed in from the throne of nothingness drifting in the gap between dimensions.

The curse spilled by the three goddesses abandoned by the will of stars to summon chaos existing in another dimension. It was distorted through the curse of [Greed] and reached some existence in a different timeline.

The voice of destruction that cursed the world. The voice of stars that wanted to become complete. They reached one existence.

"I see. You disliked the imperfect world."

It began to move.

To return the imperfect will of stars to the era it lived in.

It bloomed as a goddess of stars, not a goddess of humans.

The last goddess born with chaos in the era of stars.

An endpoint existing outside of fate that shouldn't have appeared originally.

It emitted a light of chaos, not even darkness, and crossed over through the throne of nothingness.

Memories of all magical girls.

Memories of the destroyed world.

Memories of stars.

The only thing it could empathize with, having never lived in the human era, was the voice of 'stars'.

The Magical Girl of [Stars], emitting a light made of four chaoses.

Imitated the appearance of the magical girl who had last settled in the throne of nothingness.

"You disliked escaping predetermined fate."

"Then."

"I'll help you."

The Magical Girl of [Stars] responded to the call of stars transmitted through the curse and approached across dimensions.

To end the human era according to the natural order, and begin the era of stars.

Chapter 144 : Call of the Stars (2)

December 22

"So you're saying the final dragon is embedded in the moon? Not that it came down through a rift?"

"Yeah, this is a photo of the moon's surface, and if you look here, you can see a long stain, right?"

Dorim, who had hastily come to Elysion after setting up silver mobile fortresses all over South Korea and setting them to auto-hunt, pulled out a photo.

A recent photo of the moon's surface.

On the large photo of the moon's surface that Dorim displayed, a faint dragon-like shape could indeed be seen sitting there.

A huge dragon with a long body like one might imagine for an Eastern dragon, with black wings attached.

The final trial.

The one who truly represents the will of stars.

It was standing on the vast plains of the moon, glaring at Earth.

"Why... on earth? Then when the fifth trial ended. Was the dragon of destruction already born?"

"I'm not sure about that. Originally, the way Yuki described the dragon of destruction appearing wasn't from a rift either."

"..."

The dragon of destruction came down from the sky at some point and began harvesting souls.

Without any trial rift, without any sign.

'I thought it just meant they barely overcame the fifth trial.'

Was it not strange for the dragon of destruction to appear at any time after the fifth trial from the beginning?

"The moon, the moon."

Why the moon?

"This is really just my guess, but."

"Yeah."

"The throne of nothingness that Erebos cursed. No matter how I look at it, this seems to be the cause of the dramatic change in the content of the trials."

"...Yeah."

Dorim doesn't say things like this if it's just baseless imagination.

When Dorim says "guess", it means she's speaking with almost certainty. That's why Dorim, who had prefaced with "guess", was quickly changing to a tone close to certainty.

"That throne of nothingness where those goddesses are holed up, it doesn't have like a fixed passage or place, right?"

"Yeah. It would suddenly appear when humanity's will weakened or the boundary between dimensions weakened."

"Then wasn't it embedded in the moon from the beginning?"

"Huh?"

"Like Elysion that can move here and there, the throne of nothingness appears by penetrating space if certain conditions are met. The original body is on the moon."

"..."

"Those stairs and such are a kind of fake... more precisely, dimensional magic? Something like that."

"..."

It was an idea I had never thought of.

Dorim tapped the moon surface photo repeatedly while rolling her eyes frantically.

"It always watches what humanity does, but if it's a space that can't interfere with Earth without power, the moon is the only thing that comes to mind. From ancient times, the moon has also been passed down as a symbol of goddesses."

All stories passed down from ancient myths described the moon as female.

Three goddesses of fate live on the moon.

The moon goddess has three aspects.

The three goddesses remembered by modern humans who came to know death beyond the earliest era.

Was that simply a coincidence?

Tap

Tap

Tap

Tap

Each time Dorim frantically tapped the desk to organize her thoughts, my thoughts were also being organized.

One thought that came to mind, just in case.

"What if the will of stars was also on the moon?"

"Hmm."

"What if the place the three goddesses so desperately wanted to return to was a place they could reach just by escaping the throne of nothingness right next to them?"

"Hmmm."

"What if they were precariously sealed at the boundary of dimensions due to human rejection, and could only watch from right in front?"

"Hmmmm."

Dorim thought for a moment after hearing my words and then came up with an analogy.

An analogy that any Korean would understand.

"Like eating chicken beyond a screen door in front of a hungry person?"

"...For thousands of years."

"Oh, I think I understand why those bitches were so pissed off."

We organized the story again from the beginning.

The throne of nothingness.

The dragon of destruction.

The trials.

The moon.

And the will of stars.

The way to solve all of this that we face.

It didn't seem like the answer was to endure by defeating the vaguely surging demons like now.

We needed to figure out why the will of stars, which always actively

attacked humans by any means necessary, had changed its attitude to that of a turtle.

Why it was slowly killing us off like this.

"So in short, something happened to the throne of nothingness because of Erebos' curse."

"Something went wrong with the plan the three goddesses were preparing there."

"And because of that hitch, the dragon of destruction is in a parked state?"

"Yeah."

"..."

"..."

"So what is that thing?"

"I don't know that either."

"Oh my, have I ever seen such a frustrating goddess."

Dorim wailed while beating her slender chest with her small hands, and I could only watch with an embarrassed expression. Everything was just... highly probable speculation pieced together by our imagination.

Just one thing,

What was certain was.

We had to find another way besides waiting for fate on Earth like this.

We had to find out why the dragon of trials was just quietly watching.

"We have no choice but to go towards the moon."

"..."

"Let's face the dragon directly there. And face the will of stars directly."

"No. That's not it, wait a minute. Unnie, no really. That's not an easy thing! No, how far is the moon from Earth! No, to get combatants there we'd have to build a spaceship and that's an impossible thing, unnue. No really!"

No

No

Dorim kept uttering the word Koreans say when they're most dumbfounded, trying to refute this absurd conclusion with dozens of theories.

I found Dorim's reaction amusing.

Aren't we living in an impossible miracle to begin with?

To me, this world where magical girls exist was itself a miracle.

Then isn't there no reason why the miracle of us invading the will of stars shouldn't happen?

"Is a silver ship flying in the sky plausible?"

"..."

"I'm 4-star, you're 3-star. Let's try to overcome this crisis with the combined power of 7 stars."

"...You come up with such words even in this situation."

Because there was someone who taught me to stay relaxed especially at times like this.

Because there was someone I promised to meet again after everything ends and I return to my original world.

"Hmmmm."

"What do you think, Dorim?"

"What the heck, let's give it a try."

We resolved to plan an operation to attack the place... presumed to be the will of stars.

Our first counterattack, when we had always only defended against rifts.

While protecting people from the surging demons, we aimed to advance towards the moon where the dragon of destruction was discovered.

[Project Romulus]

A battle to end the era of stars and gods, and overcome humanity's final trial.

This plan was conveyed to all magical girls through fate threads, and transmitted to the whole world enduring the endlessly surging demons.

Our enemy was waiting for us on the moon.

Unlike before when enemies came down through rifts, for the first time we are approaching them.

Where stars and gods and enemies wait.

Is it a trap?

Is it certain death?

We didn't know.

-We'll be okay.

But we could only believe and advance like fools, just as we had done until now.

From that evening, Dorim and I tried to create a flying vehicle with a body incomparably larger than anything before, using infinite

starlight.

* * *

A gray plain where nothing exists.

There was a huge dragon made of darkness. The dragon's body was like a mountain range, with grooves between its winding scales as deep as canyons.

Darkness

Chaos

The huge dragon with tens of thousands of eyeballs all over its body was conversing with a girl.

A girl with 4 starlights shining behind her back.

A goddess from another dimension.

Starlight of chaos.

The color of chaos that had escaped from the complete flow of stars, which shouldn't have existed originally, was ominous yet brilliant, containing all colors. It was a color that seemed unfathomable to human perception, making one's mind dizzy just by looking at it.

Two beings born from complete chaos.

"Yes, I see."

"■■■■."

"You suffered because of humans who brought unreasonable fate."

"■■■■."

"The star that should have been complete was suffering because of wounds."

Yes.

I understand.

I'll help you.

The Magical Girl of [Stars] held fragments of the three goddesses who tried to escape from the star, and while stroking the black dragon, left various pieces of advice.

The memory of the world that could have ended the human era.

The memory of destruction.

She whispered the appearance of that era when humans were most vulnerable and taught how to fight.

"They blaze like torches when rushed all at once, but if enveloped slowly like a gentle rain, they will fight each other and self-destruct."

We just need to watch in eternity.

Because we are beings born from the complete star.

The girl's whispers had a low yet chilling tone.

"If a salvation of fate that didn't exist comes, a destruction of fate that didn't exist will be needed."

The girl with the fate of [Stars] came as a sudden despair for humanity.

She who cheered for the will of stars was the Magical Girl of [Despair] for humanity.

Chapter 145 : Sky and Earth (1)

December 24

Christmas Eve without songs echoing through the streets or a tree set up in the middle of the square.

The streets of European countries were quiet.

Everything except for minimal production activities to maintain basic infrastructure was suspended indefinitely. This directive was only issued after many people died from scattered demons, as they had tried to forcibly continue agricultural and economic activities due to a soft perception of the trials that had been easily overcome so far.

[Demons threatening humanity.]

[The will of stars]

[Destruction]

Words that had been forgotten in the perfect peace brought about by one girl's words and achieved by the hands of numerous magical girls resurfaced in people's minds.

This was war.

Stars and humans struggling desperately to survive, with their very existence at stake.

Finally, people realized this was a real war.

Planes stopped by black birds flying in the sky,

Ships dissolved by the poison of snakes floating in the sea,

People dying from lions and horses charging across the land.

Even with magical girls fighting with all their might, they couldn't stop all the endlessly surging demons. The only way for ordinary people to protect themselves from demons that only magical girls could defeat was to hide at home.

[December 24, Small rift information announced from Elysion. There are a total of 1221 rifts occurring worldwide, and those residing within 5km of danger zones should be especially cautious...]

[The Hamburg No. 2 Emergency Shelter, which has been under urgent repair since last week, issued a notice that it can accommodate an additional 2000 citizens. After this notice was announced, about 30,000 applicants applied...]

[We will inform you of emergency evacuation procedures when encountering demons. First, not passing through areas where rifts have occurred is the first compliance matter, and second...]

Broadcasts and the internet only reported information about rifts and news about nearby shelters day after day, with no one mentioning any congratulatory words or end-of-year atmosphere. Everyone's attention was focused solely on survival.

[How to survive]

[Making a bunker]

[What to do in case of human extinction]

It was calmer than the nuclear war crisis that had suddenly arisen and shocked everyone, but the scent of fear that had slowly seeped in was coldly rotting and emitting the stench of despair. Everyone was slowly preparing for what came next. Originally, if they were annihilated by the will of stars, there would be no "next", but still, they prepared something.

Under the red sky where day and night could not be distinguished.

Citizens who heard news of magical girls patrolling around their city. They head to stores to buy groceries that have risen in price more than 20 times, hearing air raid sirens instead of bells celebrating Christmas.

What they put in their bags was not cards but precious metals, and physical items like books or small appliances.

In a reality where trust in the nation and tomorrow was falling, even cash was losing value.

"It's dangerous, so let's go together."

"Damn, to think we have to band together with neighbors just to buy canned food in front of our house. This neighborhood wasn't like this."

"What can we do if we encounter robbers? The rumors these days are so ominous."

"Shh. Be quiet."

The police and military were overwhelmed just patrolling around shelters where citizens had flocked. Looters gradually appeared on the streets, trying to take advantage of the chaos to steal from the weak.

With all factories simultaneously stopping operations, and most production activities halted for two months due to demon attacks, citizens realized that a threat of a different dimension from the trials they had easily overcome so far was approaching.

Magical girls could lose.

The human world could end.

The military is powerless.

The amount of resources is finite.

Then all that remains is to fend for oneself.

The fierce survival instinct and selfishness that had been covered by a layer in modern society were slowly raising their heads. There were citizens who questioned magical girls about why they couldn't stop the trials, but they were quickly suppressed under strict national restraints in a situation where humanity's existence was becoming

uncertain.

What remained was helplessness.

Questions arising about whether tomorrow really exists for us.

Lamentations about suddenly occurring unreasonable events.

People who could no longer fully trust magical girls swept up as much food and supplies as possible, and locked themselves in their homes. Luxury items like coffee, cigarettes, and alcohol disappeared from shops within a week, or were traded as if they were precious metals.

Doubt.

Doubt was growing in people's hearts.

Even though the girl called the goddess of hope supplied enough food to feed tens of thousands of people dozens of times a day to shelters in each country, and distributed numerous supplies with silver ships in cooperation with numerous magical girls. She could not feed and calm the entire human world.

Flap flap!

"Eek?!"

"Duck your heads!!"

Startled by the sound of ominous birds' wings, citizens hurrying along looked up at the sky.

"I-Is it a demon?!"

"..."

"...Just birds."

What was flying across the red sky was a flock of ordinary birds.

Not demons.

The citizens sighed in relief that demons had not come over their heads, and hoped that stores selling food would be open.

Even though magical girls were clearly doing their best, even though complete destruction had not yet come.

The flame of hope was disappearing too quickly.

The flame of despair was burning too quickly.

* * *

"There are more demons that look like birds. It's the first time I've seen only one type of demon like this."

"Did the Romulus Project leak?"

"If the will of stars is watching from the moon, it can't be unaware."

As Laura, the Magical Girl of [Unity], and Ella, the Magical Girl of [Heavy Armor], said, small rifts that had mainly opened where humans lived until now were appearing in the sky since we started preparing the Romulus Project.

■■■■■!!

■■■■■!!

Flocks of black birds attacking Elysion in real-time and gathering like dark clouds.

'It's rather fortunate that they're attacking here.'

It was fortunate that as attacks were concentrated on Elysion, other countries had some leeway and could give rest to other magical girls.

Because this is a space guarded by the most powerful among all magical girls.

"Iris! We'll take the west, so please handle the east!"

"Okay! Leave it to me!"

"Daphne! Sylph! Protect the people!"

"Got it."

Even now, golden magical girls showing dazzling skills were intercepting demons invading the goddess's land from the sky, with golden wings on their backs.

"Dorim."

"Yeah, I know. We need to hurry, right?"

"...That's right."

"To create such a huge structure in an instant, the Magical Girls of [Hope] and [Cyberbrain] are really amazing."

"Ah, I completely agree. Looking from below, it's truly an overwhelming size."

While Dorim and I were preparing the massive projectile above Elysion, Laura and Ella were chasing away demons coming down to interfere with us until now. And they were resting beside us, alternating with the golden magical girls.

A white streamlined projectile far larger than Sirius, which was already as long as a 20-story building.

Created on the premise of a single battle and return, an aircraft investing everything only in transport capacity, to safely carry the magical girls participating in the battle 380,000 km round trip.

The largest means of transportation we have created.

Perhaps the last miracle we will ever create.

I was grateful that the plan, which I had prepared for possibly taking several months or more, was progressing faster than imagined. Even now, in the world of humans that magical girls were protecting by mobilizing every miracle, damage was increasing through the gaps that were leaking out.

"It's fortunate that it's being built faster than expected."

"Yeah, a ship going to and from the moon is nonsensical by common sense... but maybe that's why people dream about it more. It's extremely easy to implement in the cyberbrain world. Instead, it's consuming an enormous amount of starlight, so I don't have the leeway to pay attention elsewhere... How much of your starlight have we used so far?"

"Enough to wrap the Earth five times with new fate threads."

"We're really using an astronomical amount."

The Moon.

The first place humans see when looking at space.

The dream of reaching there.

It's a dream humans have already achieved on their own, but because of that, they know how difficult it is to go beyond that. The starlight going into the aircraft that had to perform a role beyond simply reaching there was enormous.

'The greatest dream pursued by humans...'

Silver ships flying in the sky carrying thousands of people.

Fate threads encircling the Earth like a huge belt.

All of these things were bound to Earth, so despite their dreamlike appearance, they didn't require such enormous consumption as now. The dream of humanity transcending this star for the first time required an enormous amount of starlight that could shake even divinity just to reach the moon, its first step.

The power for humanity, not humans, to go to a place equal to gods.

From the perspective of the will of stars on the moon, would we look like Icarus trying to arrogantly climb up from the bottom?

Unlike the father who escaped from the truth called fate, would it

look like the wingbeats of Icarus who prepared his own foolish challenge?

■■■■■!!

■■■■■!!

The sound of those ominous wings could be heard slipping through the interception of the golden magical girls, from flocks of birds surging like dark clouds from far across the red sky.

"Another huge swarm coming."

"We'll drive them away."

"Sorry! Please do!"

"Yes, Magical Girl of [Cyberbrain]."

Laura smiled gently at Dorim, who was creating the aircraft while moving her short limbs, and climbed onto the shoulder of Ella, the Magical Girl of [Heavy Armor], who had grown gigantic.

Boom!!

The two people moved away with one leap of the dull yellow giant.

"Let's hurry."

"Yeah."

We were thus creating wings to rise to a sky equal to gods.

Like Icarus who was not satisfied with escaping fate and tried to challenge the sky.

Icarus's wings melted and he fell, but we will be different.

That's what we believed.

Chapter 146 : Sky and Earth (2)

The first beauty that the goddess revealed from the chaos of stars was sky and earth.

The ground we stand on supported us firmly and gently, and the sky that rose above our heads led us vastly and freely.s live on the earth and live according to the will of the sky.

Stars and humans live together.

We live together.

The initial beauty that was forgotten from the moment humans called the land property and arbitrarily divided it, and called the sky fate and worshipped it. That was the truth that the goddess of [Beginning] considered most beautiful and the first ritual where humans became equal to gods.

A world living together with stars.

A world that disappeared due to the wound created by the first humans desiring death.

A perfect world that disappeared due to imperfection.

Clearly, the current world has strayed far from the perfect happiness that the goddess of [Beginning] wanted.

"...Even so."

I looked back.

All those who had believed in me, loved me, and followed me until now were gathered in front of the white ark. Behind them, tens of thousands of people who wanted to believe in me one last time had gathered to watch the magical girls' final battle.

"We will move towards tomorrow."

"We love this imperfect world."

"Because there is a tomorrow due to its imperfection."

The time it takes for the Earth to make one rotation.

A time when darkness and light merely switch places once.

The time our star floats in space as we stand on it.

The world is imperfectly divided, and within it numerous times exist, and it exists splitting into numerous worlds.

"So."

For the sake of tomorrow in the world I've come to love.

For the story of the people I love.

"I'll definitely win and come back."

Hearing those words, Master nodded with a hearty laugh.

He was supporting me unchangingly.

The Sato couple cheered for Hana and me as we went off to a great battle.

They were affirming our light.

There was a girl approaching between them.

A plain bespectacled girl with messy brown hair braided down.

She handed me a certain comic book.

Though not drawn as skillfully as a professional manga artist, it contained a story she had created with her own thoughts.

＜The Legend of Magical Girl Hikari＞

-A Tale of Love and Friendship-

On the cover of the comic book was a beautiful girl with narrow eyes and a suspicious look, dressed like a magician, surrounded by numerous starlight and smiling refreshingly. Beside her were cute mascot characters resembling a cat, crow, and dog showing off their adorable appearances.

It contained a girl's interpretation of magical girls.

Narrow by being the reincarnation of the goddess of [Beginning] who plucked out her own eyes, but to represent a sly personality wanting to trick dirty adults in the darkness.

Magic containing a girl's own shining dreams, not power to withstand the will of stars and demons.

Cute mascots guiding magical girls on the right path, not apostles who gave up on themselves or fought against the world in distorted fate.

"Shirogane-san."

"Busujima-san."

"It's been a while."

"Yeah. It really has... been a while."

Haruko, whom I was seeing after a really long time, seemed to have a more mature face than last year.

Eyes sparkling while imagining shining stories, not an unconfident and timid expression. It was the talent of a storyteller who had shed hesitation and shyness in unfolding her own story.

The growth of a human.

The girl who called herself an unremarkable person and hid herself had finally fully bloomed her own sparkle from within.

"The Legend of Magical Girls... isn't that too exaggerated?"

"Since Shirogane-san is a goddess, I originally wanted to call it 'The Myth of Magical Girls' but changed it."

"A myth..."

"Because our story is not a story of gods."

That sparkle was emitting some light different from the earthy color of Haruko's glass star.

"A story believing in the sparkle of human magical girls and dreaming of tomorrow."

"..."

"A story of girls' hopes and dreams."

Haruko grasped both my hands tightly.

"I'm going to keep drawing the beautiful story that Shirogane-san left behind."

"A beautiful... story."

"Yes."

Magical girl

Dream

Hope

Love

Faith

Friendship

Trust

Responsibility

"Even if someone criticizes it as a childish and simple story, the

sparkle I saw..."

Haruko's eyes seemed to be recalling the dream of a rose she saw at Odaiba Broadcasting Station and the bright sky of Yokohama.

Because I too was recalling our beginning while looking at her face.

We met briefly and passed by each other.

Because of Haruko, I took the first step to start all stories.

Because of me, Haruko wanted to write down the story of shining magical girls.

"...Because it contained the most precious value above all else."

"...I'm glad I met Busujima-san that day."

"Fuhihi, so please make sure to win so that I can refer to it even if I run out of material while drawing manga."

I carefully opened the comic book, then returned it to Haruko.

'A story of girls' dreams and hopes.'

Though it was a comic full of amateur-like clumsy composition, abrupt flow, and childish dialogue. It made me smile because it seemed to affirm my life.

"Yeah, I'll definitely win."

After saying goodbye, I looked around one last time.

The magical girls challenging the final battle had to be very strong because they couldn't return to the battlefield if they died, and they had to have abilities to help other magical girls in the unfamiliar space of the moon.

'And we need magical girls to protect people from the endlessly surging demons.'

I left behind Himari who had to lead the relief corps, Dorim who was virtually invincible against small demons, and Alisa who had to take

care of dead magical girls.

Those gathered here now were the magical girls heading to the final battlefield.

Ichika was bumping fists with Kyoko and laughing loudly, relaxed as always.

Sumire was hugging the salon members and Kaede, quietly saying she'd be back.

Hana was vigorously making resolutions with the golden girls, breaking away from her parents.

Yuki was comforting her sobbing father, stroking his head.

Laura, Ella, Li Meilin, and Li Na were exchanging words of encouragement with the magical girls who approached them.

"Then I'll be going."

"Yes, Hecate-nim."

Hecate left only a very brief greeting to Iris and was about to return to me.

Stop

But Hecate turned back and began to take off her hood in front of Iris. As the hood slowly came off, silver hair flowed out, and Iris was frozen in surprise at Hecate's sudden action.

"Miss Hecate?! That's?!"

"Take this."

Swish

Swish

Hecate was wrapping the hood she had been wearing all along around Iris, the Magical Girl of [Wing].

Somehow I felt I knew the meaning.

I felt I knew the meaning of giving her the hood she had worn continuously since birth as a divine maiden to hide her identity.

Tears were gradually welling up in Iris's eyes.

"...I can't."

"It has to be you."

"Don't say that. Please!"

"No, I spilled grape juice on the hood and it smells. Please wash it."

"As if you're sacrificing... What?"

"I accidentally spilled it while playing games... I'm asking you to do the laundry. Iris."

Indeed, there was a clear purple stain on the inside of the dazzlingly white hood.

"Miss Hecate!!"

"Well then, goodbye."

Hecate finally approached me with a relieved expression, and Iris looked at the stain on the hood, making a crying face before chuckling as if finding it absurd.

'Is this Hecate's way of being considerate?'

I started the engine to enter the white ark, and slipped in a word between the voices of magical girls still saying goodbye.

"...You're really handing it over, right?"

"Shh. She'll hear. I judged we should prepare for any situation."

"You did well."

We will definitely win.

But there were preparations we had to complete for those left behind.

'It's contradictory. But it can't be helped.'

After saying goodbye, we boarded the ark. There, Chen Lihua, the Magical Girl of [Lightning], and Natalia, the Magical Girl of [Navigation], were already on board having finished preparations.

"Departure preparations complete."

[This is Elysion Observatory. Please make sure to win and come back.]

"Of course."

Not the final ark, but a massive ship to guide us across the sea of darkness to the land of gods.

For our final battle, for our first and last counterattack.

All the magical girls participating in this operation took their seats.

As I entered the engine power unit in the center of the body.

Slowly light was entering the massive white body, absorbing my white starlight.

Wooooong—!!

[Notice from Pollux, Good luck Hikari!!!]

[Notice from Bright Moon, Li Meilin!! Don't be scared!!]

[From the European Union!! Laura, do your best!!!]

[Notice from the Supernatural Ability Countermeasures Team. Come back safely, unnie!!]

[Notice from the Russian Relief Team, you must return safely. Alisa sends her regards too.]

[The Relief Corps representative announces. We'll definitely protect the Earth. Please return safely.]

Messages of hope and faith from all magical girls were arriving.

The dazzling white was filling the space we were sitting in, entering all the drive units and circuits engraved on the surface.

-From the fate threads. All magical girls from every domain are cheering.

-People's support is continuing from each country's relay broadcast stations.

"Then could you relay this?"

-Yes?

"That we'll definitely win and return. Please believe in the goddess of hope."

Faaaash—!!

The massive white ark was slowly rising into the air, shining like a lighthouse.

Let's begin.

Our tomorrow.

A story full of hope.

* * *

That sight was like a sun rising over the red sky.

It was as bright as a sun splitting the ominous twilight and opening a hopeful morning.

People in the shelters couldn't take their eyes off the screens broadcasting that sight.

A dazzling light advancing, dividing sky and earth.

"...Win."

"Make sure to win and come back."

Those words muttered quietly by someone in the shelter gradually spread through people's mouths. Barely suppressing some emotion that was rising, they kindled one feeling in their hearts.

Chapter 147 : Despair (1)

The Magical Girl of [Stars] saw white starlight slowly approaching through her vision.

A color that didn't exist in the world she came from.

Starlight that didn't exist in the starlight of chaos where all colors were mixed was approaching.

"They're coming."

The Magical Girl of [Stars] watched the light rising along the orbit. Light approached the moon, beyond the realm of earth and even the sky. Following that light, the flame of despair stopped in the hearts of those born from fragments of stars, and a small hope began to burn again.

The Magical Girl of [Stars] couldn't understand this.

Since everything living on this star was born from complete chaos, returning to one again was the natural order. True peace would be returning to the perfect world. Why were they prolonging the time of suffering?

What difference was there between living by receiving things from the star on its surface, and living as one with the star?

What the Magical Girl of [Stars] couldn't understand.

The will of stars resonating with the Magical Girl of [Stars] also couldn't understand it.

We were one from the beginning, and we're just returning to complete oneness.

There's only one predetermined result, so why cling to the process?

What meaning is there in the process to be so elated or dejected about it?

Why?

This world is destined to return to complete chaos anyway.

Distinguishing sky and earth, distinguishing each other, dividing everything into imperfect pieces.

What meaning could there possibly be in those actions?

It was incomprehensible.

However, the Magical Girl of [Stars] used the authority brought from a future where even the meaning of time and space had disappeared, according to the voice of the star that had asked for help across dimensions. The authority of a goddess born at the time when everything ended, equal to the goddess born at the time when everything began.

[Stars] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Eternal Return

Everything returns towards the predetermined flow.

Rewinding time from the fixed present.

An authority that can be brought from the purest world, the purest chaos.

The chaotic glass color possessed by the Magical Girl of [Stars] burned like the sun as she used the enormous authority. Indescribable chaotic starlight was surging over the quiet gray plain.

A light of ten thousand colors that made one's mind dizzy just by looking at it.

Chaos

"..."

The Magical Girl of [Stars] fought in repeating time.

In the time flowing and returning again in this world, a 3-day battle that no one except one person could recognize had changed repeated. The battle returned again every time the Magical Girl of [Stars] was defeated, repeating countless times.

"..."

The white ark cutting through the sky and approaching the moon, magical girls fighting to determine the fate of the world. In that battle, the Magical Girl of [Stars] fought alone using every means.

Gradually learning the powers of magical girls through repeated battles.

Comparing with what had changed in the memories of destruction.

She fought on alone.

Once

The white magical girl using numerous authorities overwhelmingly defeats the dragon of destruction, the shadows of the three goddesses, and the Magical Girl of [Stars], coming on a massive ark navigating space with support from those left on the ground.

She easily overcame even the will of stars with power from infinite starlight containing everyone's dreams.

As she was about to seal even the Magical Girl of [Stars] while sealing the main body of the throne settled on the moon's surface and the wills of stars, it returned.

Twice

Concentrating all demons towards the path the white ark was approaching. Causing chaos by sending the shadows of the three goddesses to the small earth they cherish so they can't help the ark. But they overcome everything after a close battle.

The shadows of goddesses summoned by the Magical Girl of [Stars]

were powerful, but they were stopped by the numerous magical girls left on the ground, and couldn't hold out long enough for the white magical girl to seal the will of stars.

"..."

Third, fourth, fifth time.

And the sixth return.

The Magical Girl of [Stars], who had experienced returns enough to make even the power of stars creak, looked back.

The star was in pain.

"Sorry, did I rewind too much?"

A strained voice is heard from the will of stars.

The dragon of destruction was struggling, surprised by the suddenly used power of the world.

"■■■■..."

It was now difficult to rewind the star's time.

If the star's time is rewound any further, it will consume even the power to return to complete chaos.

"It's difficult fighting alone after all."

In repeating time.

Among the memories of endlessly trying with changes, there were certainly effective attacks.

"The most effective was..."

The Magical Girl of [Stars] grew even stronger and made effective plans in repeating time.

The most effective plan among them was deception.

To make them believe it was already over.

To make them give up that they can't resist fate..

The attack that made even the Magical Girl of [Hope] falter in the last sixth return. Her infinite starlight comes from human belief and dreams. That authority surpassing goddesses is created by molding more human dreams than any history.

'Then what if we break human belief and dreams?'

She could no longer use Eternal Return on the world, but she could use it on some targets.

She could use it even on the memories of giant demons that had already fallen.

[Rise, demons of trials.]

Children whose missions were thwarted in the tyranny of changed fate.

Rise.

Whisper the language of deception so humans will give up.

* * *

Kohane, the Magical Girl of [Armor], was composing herself inside the armor. Her friends were all tense for the first time, completely cut off from Sumire, their reliable leader, and having to guard the empty spot of the Magical Girl of [Protection].

"Whew."

The red sky she had seen so much that even her sense of time was numbed.

In the middle of Tokyo where everyone had hidden in shelters.

Boom!

Boom!

Kwang!

"Interception complete."

Even now, Kohane was defending by deploying the awesome final form of her armor whenever small rifts opened. The flight-type armor that had grown so large it looked like a ship at a glance boasted an overwhelming size that could cover Tokyo Dome with just its shadow.

Help from friends

-After all, Kohane is the strongest in firepower.

-It's an ability even my 'jealousy' can't copy.

-Hoet, isn't Kaede-chan's ability to copy properly even rarer?

-Shut up.

Though Kohane alone couldn't have made it, with the help of friends who shared their starlight even at the risk of the curse of struggle. She was able to create armor for just one battle.

Just one moment

Starlight on par with fully bloomed magical girls if for just one battlefield.

Giant armor

Armor to create the future for Kohane and Daichi.

"Nyuhuhu, in the final battle to prevent the world's destruction... we can't stop it if we're afraid of mere curses."

Now she doesn't need to grow as a magical girl anymore.

Because her dream has already come true, because she will achieve her remaining dreams without the help of stars.

When defeating the fifth trial, she dreamed of spending the rest of her life taking care of her brother who had started finding stability in

the psychiatric hospital, and running a plastic model shop with her friends. But this damn world wouldn't simply allow even Kohane's modest dream.

[Kohane! Suddenly a large number of black lion demons are surging in!]

[I'll go towards Tokyo Bay.]

[Kaede-chan! Get on my back!! I'll take you there!!]

Kohane was checking if she had missed any signals from Elysion Observatory, clicking her tongue at the sudden radio transmission. But no matter how much she looked, there were no rifts opening in the sky.

'I intercepted them all.'

Urgent radio transmissions reached Kohane's ears as she checked for any missed rifts.

[Notice from Elysion Observatory!! A huge demon has appeared in Shinjuku without a rift!!]

"Suddenly?!"

[It's a giant lion demon! It's advancing while dividing small lions from its body even now!]

"Magical Girl of [Armor] receiving! Kohane sortying!!"

The giant armor activating with a roar

A massive engine sound spreading around

Swoooosh—!!

The screen visible through the armor's camera as it flew like a fighter jet towards Shinjuku resembled the scene of a trial she had seen before.

Black demons endlessly pouring out from a giant structure.

Though there were no reddish-brown magical girls and soldiers, the atmosphere was surprisingly similar to the trial.

But what shocked Kohane was something else.

[Abandoned... humans.]

[Return...]

[From the surface of the star... to the chaos of the star.]

[Come back.]

[Not death... but completeness.]

[Born from nothingness, return to nothingness.]

[Everything is nothingness.]

[Completeness lies in nothingness.]

[Stillness, quietness is completeness.]

The black lions were speaking in human language.

Instead of the terrible howls they always made, they were singing of determined fate in low voices.

They were whispering to humans that following predetermined fate was the natural order.

Chapter 148 : Despair (2)

[From the surface of the star... to the chaos of the star.]

[Come back.]

[Not death... but completeness.]

The black lions were speaking in human language.

The horde of lions surging like a black wave was advancing while chanting in unison. It was like a procession of priests spreading divine grace and preaching the gospel. It was like a gathering of devotees serving a god they called chaos.

Endlessly multiplying the priests of chaos, even letting magical girls' interceptions pass through.

They came crashing in like the massive wave said to have annihilated all humans in mythology.

Time of destruction

Wave of destruction

They finally crashed into a building where people were hiding.

Boooom!!

Beyond the collapsed wall, citizens who had been waiting for this moment to pass were aghast. A man and woman who looked like siblings were frozen in front of the lion entering while destroying the building, trembling.

[Return.]

"Eek?!"

"Uwaaaa!!"

Screams. Screams of the two siblings.

Seeing this, Kohane's mind turned white with rage.

"I won't let you do as you please!!"

The enraged Kohane pulled the trigger with all her might with her small finger.

Click! Whirr!

Cold sweat soaking the cold metal handle transmits the signal with vibration.

Signal

Separation

Vibration

Recoil

Following the signal that passed in an instant, all weapon systems activated as the armor's circuits came to life.

Dudududududu!!

[Return.]

[Return.]

The machine gun created under Li Na's starlight influence spewed fire, pushing back the lions.

Still, there were too many lions, and eventually a few approached the two siblings.

It seemed like they were about to open their mouths wide and swallow them like in the past trials, but...

[Return.]

[Come back.]

[Return to completeness.]

They only let golden starlight flow while looking at the man and woman.

The starlight of chaos whispered the truth.

The image and reality of chaos was projected into their minds.

Humans are like dust living for a fleeting moment on the surface of a star.

Everything they had dreamed of was hidden under infinite starlight.

Our world is imperfect.

Fate is predetermined, resisting only brings suffering.

Accept it.

"Return..."

"Into the star."

The man and woman, persuaded by the chaotic starlight, muttered while touching the black lion's nose.

They melted into golden starlight and disappeared in an instant.

"What?!"

[Everything is over.]

[The white magical girl has left.]

[Return to the complete flow of stars.]

[Here is life and death, time and space, earth and sky, everything.]

"That can't be!!"

No matter how much Kohane shouted, people who were inwardly troubled by reality were drawn into chaos, led by the lions' whispers.

Fear, anger, sadness, only endlessly consuming and eroding human energy.

If you just surrender to predetermined fate,

If destruction isn't so painful.

I will return.

"Return."

"Come back."

"Into the star."

[Notice from Elysion Observatory!! We've confirmed that all trial demons have been revived worldwide!! Ci-citizens are returning to the flow of stars following the words of the trial demons!!]

What on earth is happening?

The question that arose in Kohane's mind.

"N-No!!"

There's no way the life we've lived has been in vain.

There's no such thing as a life with a predetermined outcome.

My life and my brother's life weren't in vain.

Though we went astray and came back, we can move forw...

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

'...Can we?'

[Return.]

[Return.]

Kohane just blankly pulled the trigger, defeating demons indiscriminately.

The black lions multiplied again, emitting solemn voices like priests.

No matter how many she defeated, they filled the empty spaces and surged in.

"..."

Bang!

Bang!

Bang!

Still, Kohane pulled the trigger operating the armor's weapons.

If she looked closely at the people who were blankly melting away into golden starlight even now, surrendering their bodies to the black demons, she felt she might go mad too. She felt she might be persuaded by their words.

She just defeated the demons she saw before her.

"Return."

"Come back."

"Into the star."

[Here is all the happiness you live for.]

"Return."

"Come back."

"Into the star."

[You no longer need to suffer.]

"Return."

Kohane looked at the mass of black lions filling the ground and the giant lion passing by in the distance. Watching them made her feel somehow sleepy. Thus, Kohane gradually fell into the massive golden starlight emitted by tens of thousands of lions.

'So this... was the ending.'

Golden

Chaos

Golden starlight entering between Kohane's eyelids showed her the scenery in chaos.

The happiest memory.

Seeing it, her struggling self somehow seemed foolish.

'What, it's not that terribly painful.'

All that's left anyway is a mentally ill brother and a skinny girl.

How happy could we be from now on.

Wouldn't it be better for brother to shed his flesh tainted by dirty adults' deception, and spend days making plastic models together in memories?

Such thoughts suddenly occurred to her.

"Return..."

-*Wow! Kohane! Come here!*

-*What is it, Assistant?*

-*It's a limited edition armor plastic model!*

-*Wooow!!*

"Come... back."

[Kohane!! What are you doing?!! A giant demon has come right in front!!]

[This is the observatory!! The Magical Girl of [Armor] needs to evacuate quickly!!]

[Kohane!! Can you hear me?!]

[Kohane!!!]

The urgent radio transmissions seemed foolish.

Somehow, fighting now also seemed foolish.

Come here everyone, it's incredibly comfortable if you just accept it.

You were suffering too, weren't you?

[Kohaaaane!!!! Noooooo!!!]

Noisy.

I was tired.

"Hmm... hmm... hmm, hmm bam..."

Kohane could no longer resist her heavy eyelids and fell asleep humming the opening of the armor anime she had enjoyed watching the most. Beyond the golden dream, there was nothing but happy memories from her life so far.

Her mentally sound brother was leisurely making plastic models while scratching his plump belly. She was watching anime while eating the delicious meal her brother had made.

What was visible on the screen was the final episode of the mecha anime she had enjoyed watching the most.

What

I was worried because they said it was destruction.

But it's nothing much.

'It's just dying in heaven.'

I should have given up sooner.

Kohane, who had started to surrender her body to the golden starlight, couldn't recall.

That despair is not writhing in pain.

But quietly resigning to the inevitable outcome.

Beyond her vision that had started to be completely dyed in darkness, the current image of her brother flashed by.

-Ko, Kohane... hang in there.

"Brother?"

Emaciated body

Ceaselessly rolling eyes

Scarred body

Her brother, who had become somewhat stable after receiving intensive treatment at the psychiatric hospital, started to recognize her little by little even in his delusions.

Very occasionally.

-Oh, Daichi-san, you look healthy today.

Even after confirming that her father had died fighting in a foreign bar, Li Na still came to the psychiatric hospital with her composedly.

-Well, it's natural since it's healing ability I directly received with 'jealousy' all the way in Europe.

Even without the boss's orders, Kaede often helped them with gruff but warm words.

-Kohane-chan, let's hang in there together.

Even though she still couldn't find her mother, Nanami said she would take care of the shipping when Kohane ran a plastic model shop.

In Kohane's 'present' life, there existed the help and hope of numerous people.

It wasn't something she could carelessly throw away by her will alone.

-Ko, Kohane... to, today too... Ma, Mars... Em, Empire... mu, much...

-Nyuhuhuhut, as expected of Assistant, no, Ace Pilot! Well done!

That's how we move forward little by little!

Kohane too

Daichi too

We were full of mistakes, but we were getting a little better than now.

To make the ending of our lives better.

There was no predetermined ending anywhere.

We were just moving forward wanting a better ending.

Kohane finally felt her mind clearing.

-System reboot, switching to combat mode-

"Nyuhuhu, while my friends and the Ace Pilot are fighting the Mars Empire, I was about to sell that out."

-Entering final sequence, requesting pilot's permission-

I really am unqualified as a pilot.

Kohane muttered that while looking at the giant black lion staring at

her right in front.

The vanguard of the Mars Empire that throws us into a swamp of sorrow.

Kohane turned on all the armor's speakers and shouted composedly towards the evil horde.

All the people who were fleeing or despairing from the black lions focused on the armor's speakers ringing out loudly.

[There is no predetermined ending in the world!! That only exists in anime!!]

[Don't give up!! The heart contained in the process of taking one more step forward than yesterday!!]

[That is what life is!!]

-Entering final battle mode-

Bwaaaaaaaa—!!

Behind the giant armor, ivory, khaki, fluorescent scarlet, and deep green starlight shone brilliantly, and the boosters emitted dazzlingly brilliant light.

Faaaash!

All the armor's weapon depots opened, rifles in both hands and missiles on the shoulders activated, and small missiles and drones poured out from the giant container on the back.

-All rounds firing drive-

"Fire!!!"

From thousands of weapons spewing from the armor larger than buildings, she poured out starlight along with the emotions of a girl who had made mistakes thousands of times, been sad thousands of times, and been angry thousands of times.

Indescribable emotions

Massive explosion

The armor's exterior was made of cold alloy plates, but the core shone brilliantly in ivory and had hot heat.

As much as Kohane's life

As much as Kohane's heart

As much as the heart of a girl who expected tomorrow despite being full of mistakes.

It was hot.

[Armor is completed with a hot heart!!!]

At this moment, Kohane's armor was completed in its most awesome form.

As armor named hope that sweeps away the despair of watching people.

The giant ivory armor, to create tomorrow.

With her friends' starlight spewing from its back.

Charged towards the giant black lion tempting humanity.

Chapter 149 : Despair (3)

If the end of humans is predetermined, and it's not as painful as we thought.

Is there meaning in our lives?

People overwhelmed by the gentle words whispered by the black demons, starting with those whose lives were most painful, those who were most afraid of living. Gradually accepting the chaotic starlight, they melted into the wounds of the star.

[Return.]

The black priests spreading the gospel of chaos appeared in different forms, endlessly multiplying and continuing their march. Not in the language of stars but in language that resonates with human hearts, they whispered a gentle ending while denying their reason for existence and lives.

[Return.]

Following the guidance of the six resurrected beasts, human existence rapidly disappeared and returned to the flow of stars. Numerous cities were already completely empty, shining only with ownerless lights and magical girls' starlight.

"Return."

"Return."

Humanity was slowly being divided, giving up, and despairing by gentle whispers.

A scene happening all over the world.

People diminished faster than the blink of an eye.

Even on Busan's coast, black sea serpents endlessly climbed up the shore, and black birds endlessly descended from the sky, whispering the deception of chaos.

[Come back.]

[Come back.]

[To the embrace of the star.]

Sea serpents that broke through the fire net of silver mobile fortresses laid out on South Korean territory by the Magical Girl of [Cyberbrain] entered the land and were roaming the streets with low voices, and demons that pushed into shelters faced people.

[Come back.]

Their frightened eyes were slowly becoming dull, enchanted by the golden starlight.

[Come back.]

"Come ba..."

"Come back where!! Get a grip!!"

Slap!!

The young man studying for exams who regained his senses after tasting a hand like a pot lid looked around bewilderedly. Just a moment ago, he was eating pigs' feet with his parents who were cheering after he got accepted to university. But there was no golden scenery, only the red sky and Busan streets turned into hell.

"W-What is this?!"

"What do you mean what, it's a lie."

"W-Why are you hitting people, auntie?"

"What? AUNTIE?"

"S-Sister."

"Thwack!! You brat!"

"Eek."

Mrs. Kim slapped the back of the frustrating young man to chase him away, then called Hong Captain and people to build a barricade in front of the market to block the demons' movement. If the sea serpents entered the market and tempted people who had lived tough lives, numerous people would fall for that trick.

People doubt magical girls and give up.

They accept and give up on the surging destruction.

If people who transmit dreams to magical girls decrease this quickly, it would return as an unparalleled poison to the magical girls continuing endless battles even now. Mrs. Kim sighed, remembering the young faces and brilliantly shining eyes of the White Wing Unit girls Nayeon had brought.

'Nayeon, this is no ordinary situation. Hang in there.'

Hoping that her daughter, still maneuvering freely in the sea ahead, wouldn't be enchanted by that wicked voice and give up on her life. Mom and Dad have never regretted or wanted to give up everything while living after giving birth to you.

Mrs. Kim snorted like a bull once and shouted proudly.

"Whose daughter would she be to fall for such lies."

"Re, return..."

"What? What return? The only 'won' you can mention in front of me is 1000 won, 5000 won, and 10000 won!"

Slap!!

Mr. Heo the drunkard, who had stupidly sat down, was talking blankly with a sea serpent when his head turned, and when he came to his senses, he quickly ran forward. Mrs. Kim thus awakened the minds of numerous people with her palm trained by 20 years of

running a soup restaurant as she advanced.

"Get a grip!! We can't give up like this!!"

"Our daughters are fighting!!"

"Aren't the years you've lived so far precious?"

As much as there were people who gave up everything and surrendered to despair, there were people moving forward believing in the light of magical girls. That's why the Magical Girl of [Hope] could maintain a considerable amount of starlight, though no longer infinite.

* * *

[Return.]

"Eek?!"

Crash!

The woman whose calm expression had completely crumbled, Misaki Maegamen, finally sat down surrounded by demons. Black birds were perched on surrounding trees and utility poles like iron filings stuck to a magnet, and all roads were surrounded by black horses and lions.

The shelter had already been completely overrun by demons, and Misaki, who was fleeing in a hurry, was caught by the demons.

[Return.]

"D-Don't come!! Kyaaaa!!"

The despair's incantation dug into Misaki's heart, which had been somewhat empty despite admiring magical girls more than anyone and creating the most shining girl dolls. It was touching on her self-loathing for wasting 35 years of life on dolls, and lingering feelings for the boyfriend she had broken up with for a ridiculous reason.

[Return.]

"No!! Help!!"

Despair digs into her heart.

The question of what to live for anymore fills her.

Because Misaki's life was full of regret and self-loathing, the golden starlight that stirred the darkness hidden by the sparkle of magical girls was so frightening.

'Tadayoshi-kun...'

Unlike herself who ran solely towards her dream after graduating from the sculpture department of art school, her boyfriend who walked the path of an elite while designing a steady future after graduating from law school was diligent.

So diligent that it was painful to be by his side due to self-loathing.

'I'm sorry.'

If she had said let's get married with a little confidence instead of breaking up that day.

Wouldn't things have been a little different?

Would he, a policeman, still be alive now?

Whirrrr—!!

Sound of a chainsaw

Golden starlight

Whirrrr—!!

"Please duck your head."

"Huh? Oh, yes."

Crack

Crack

Crack

Golden surgical tools and chainsaws shining like ginkgo leaves fluttering were splitting all the surrounding demons.

Golden storm

The Magical Girl of [Nursing] calmly cut and dismembered demons with each step.

In the midst of the massive golden storm, Misaki could only blankly watch the beautiful girl's dance.

She wanted to sculpt her dance that was noble and elegant, though not as much as the white girl.

Whirrrr—!!

Kagagagak—!!

While expressionlessly cutting down demons with her golden chainsaw, Himari glanced at Misaki.

"Are you unable to move?"

"Ah, no."

"There's a shelter set up by the guard corps ahead, so please follow it straight. If you request protection from the police stationed there, they will gladly accept you."

"Y-Yes."

"Do you have any more questions?"

"C-Can I make a Magical Girl of [Nursing] doll after overcoming all the trials?"

"Of course."

"Wow?! So quickly?"

Himari smiled slightly at Misaki and moved on towards people who

needed help. Her appearance was like that of a perfect angel, and somewhat like a pure girl.

A pure white apron stained with the blood of demons.

A noble golden nurse.

It was the moment Misaki's second favorite was decided.

Misaki, who had come to her senses, ran towards the guard corps' shelter, but laughed at herself for expecting tomorrow.

She didn't want to die.

She wanted to keep living and sculpt the beautiful magical girls in a different way.

* * *

The power unit of the ark was full of white light, but it was noticeably dimmer than when it had departed.

It was because of the extinction of dreams.

-Hikari, is the starlight coming back again?

"Yeah, it was a bit dangerous in the middle, but if it remains like this, we can continue sailing to the moon."

I answered confidently to Yuki's question, but in fact it was still precarious even now.

The ark heading towards the moon was the greatest miracle of all, so it was created assuming infinite starlight.

'To think the amount of starlight would decrease so suddenly.'

If this continued, we would have to be very careful in dealing with the dragon of destruction waiting on the moon.

Failure is not allowed.

We only have one chance given to us.

I had a bad feeling from the moment I felt the total amount of starlight that was as good as infinite. Sure enough, the news that all the trial demons had been revived and were showing the same behavior as the dragon of destruction. It made me consider turning the ark's helm back towards Earth for a moment.

Humanity's despair.

Extinction of dreams.

As the things forming the basis of infinite starlight were dismantled, the ark's speed quickly decreased. Our plan to arrive quickly on the moon was about to be greatly disrupted.

What was preventing that were the magical girls and the people led by their light.

They were persuading people who were letting go of their lifelines, pulling people back from despair.

The scale that had instantly tipped towards despair was slowly returning to equilibrium.

[Please believe in us.]

[We won't be broken!!]

[Please keep moving forward!!]

"..."

-This is Natasha. If the starlight output is maintained, it will take about 3 hours to reach the moon from now.

"Understood. Please tell everyone to finish preparations soon."

-Understood.

What was visible through the vision imbued with divinity was the rapidly diminishing souls of humans and the moon slowly approaching the ark.

And the divinity felt there.

The three goddesses.

'Though the will of the goddesses can't be felt, they certainly exist there.'

And there was one more unknown divinity that wasn't born from the human era.

A being close to primordial chaos.

Perhaps a being equal to the goddess of [Beginning].

A being I felt like it had power similar to the will of stars.

That being kept emitting massive starlight while watching us approach.

"..."

The move of tempting people with sudden trial demons to make my starlight finite was chillingly brilliant. Though we had never faced it before, that move that struck our vital point somehow felt ominous.

'...What will be the next move from now on?'

Only the surface of the moon slowly becoming visible before our eyes can solve our curiosity now.

Chapter 150 : Despair (4)

-30 minutes left until arrival on the moon's surface.

Natalia's tense voice.

"..."

"..."

A distance so far that even the connection with the fate threads touching all of Earth was precarious.

Inside the ark shining with beautiful white starlight. All the magical girls gathered there couldn't take their eyes off the screen Natalia, the Magical Girl of [Navigation], was watching.

The moon observed with the power of the Magical Girl of [Hope].

The moon's surface. Pale plains.

On the gray plain spread over the dark space, a throne made of cold stone was visible. The place of exile for gods that had existed since ancient times stood alone on the gray plain full of rugged craters.

Four massive thrones without a single gap, as if carved from one huge rock.

The place where four goddesses once banished by humanity were exiled.

Now, no goddess sat on those cold thrones.

Yuki recalled the stairs she had once climbed when gripped by despair.

The miracle in the form of stairs that the three goddesses had

descended after humanity's destruction seemed to be sucked into darkness with each step. Finally, in the throne of nothingness that had entered the gap between dimensions, only fragments of flesh left behind by the three goddesses as they returned to the flow of stars remained.

She had returned one year before the time of destruction.

Yuki had come back here again.

Following the shining hope, overcoming ideals in a form close to perfection while defeating all darkness. The humanity and magical girls she had thus protected were cheering on the girls ascending in the ark from below, fighting against the worst trial.

'I'm back, I've finally come back here again.'

Not in a futile way of retracing where destruction had passed, but to solve the cause of destruction.

She came back not as [Resurrection] but as [Love].

"I have a bad feeling."

"...I see."

"When Ichika says that, something always happens."

"It's never bad to be prepared."

"..."

Ichika, who had been sitting with her eyes closed, suddenly muttered. Following her words, Sumire, Hana, Lihua, and Hecate quietly stood up from their seats and drew out their unique weapons or raised starlight.

Whenever Ichika, who had almost prophetic insight in combat situations, gave a warning. A sudden situation always occurred, or an attack that couldn't have been avoided if not prepared for approached.

"Everyone should prepare for now."

"We're already prepared!"

The three who had experienced the importance of that muttering through numerous battles and trials calmly prepared so they could deal with any situation that might occur immediately, as if used to it.

"Meilin, stick behind me."

"Y-Yes...!"

Li Meilin, the Magical Girl of [Harmony], and Laura, the Magical Girl of [Unity], had almost no combat ability, but they could help magical girls maintain vital activities smoothly in the unfamiliar space of the moon, so they stood up from their seats escorted by the Magical Girls of [Memorization] and [Heavy Armor] respectively.

Something is approaching at high speed.

-Everyone prepare for emergency landing!! The dragon of destruction is approaching!!

-Setting emergency landing mode.

As soon as the words of the Magical Girl of [Hope] in the engine power unit ended, Natasha moved the ark, and a massive whisper was heard inside the shaking ark.

[Return, those living on the surface of the star.]

Along with a vibration that seemed to resonate in their heads, the ark slowly rocked while conveying the dragon's voice.

A curse of chaos that felt like it would make one lose oneself for an instant passed by.

Guooooo—!!

A black demon with such a presence that the surroundings shook just from passing nearby brushed by.

Black that felt like a single topographical feature just by its body, beyond the realm of living creatures.

Black dragon.

Mountain range of darkness.

It wrapped around the ark lengthwise, shining tens of thousands of pairs of eyes on scales all over its body, emitting chaotic light.

Grrrr—!!

The ceiling and floor swayed and shook, and white starlight flared up greatly for a moment, defending as much as possible.

Booooooom!!

Collision

Inside the ark shaking as if an earthquake had occurred, the magical girls each raised starlight to prepare for the impact. Amidst this, Natasha struggled to operate the ark, trying to slip through between the long body of the attacking dragon of destruction.

"Kugh!! We can't avoid it!!"

The black dragon as long as a mountain range began to wrap its body around the massive white oval aircraft, and a chilling sound rang out as scars were engraved on the flawless white body. Though it wasn't completely destroyed thanks to being protected by white starlight. If they remained still like this, they might lose the ark.

-If this continues, the ark will...!

-I'll stop it.

Hikari, who was watching this situation from the power room, was buying time by sending out Galateas, but while enduring attacks imbued with the blessings of white giant stars and cause and effect reversal, the dragon of destruction was persistently blocking the ark's navigation.

* * *

Kuuung!!

The dragon of destruction that suddenly sprang out from the moon's surface and began attacking the ark.

The demon serving as the final gatekeeper of the ritual that the goddess who loved humanity called a 'trial' to be overcome, and the star trying to absorb humanity called 'return' to be accepted, had approached.

The dragon's action of rushing at the ark while leaving the throne on the barren lunar surface and the entrance to the will of stars empty. That action was enough to bewilder me for a moment.

'This can't stop everything.'

No matter how much it's the dragon of destruction, it won't be able to withstand the combined attack of Galatea and fully bloomed magical girls to the end, and if I go down directly during that time and block the passage where the will of stars flows out, this world will completely belong to humanity.

It shouldn't be unaware of this.

It was a bewildering sight like seeing a goalkeeper running out to the opponent's camp while leaving the goal empty.

'I thought it would protect the throne of nothingness to the end...?'

From the basis of the behavior shown by such a dragon of destruction, I could feel the presence of one being still emitting chaotic starlight on the moon's surface.

The true gatekeeper protecting the will of stars was the divinity that appeared wrapped in that chaotic starlight.

"..."

Is this how it ends up after all.

Drrrrr—!!

[What difference is there between living on the surface of the star and returning to the flow of the star?]

"Muttering without knowing anything since earlier..."

[Return. Stop meaningless actions and come back to the embrace of the star.]

"If it's meaningless, why are you desperately blocking it? I'll refuse such things."

Curse of demons.

Since hearing the news that people enchanted by nihilism that denies even the process of human life itself, viewed thoroughly from the star's perspective, were entering the wounds of the star. Anger welled up every time I heard that chilling muttering.

"Enchanting people who don't know anything."

The six trial demons that suddenly appeared.

They advanced only to harvest human souls, and no matter how many times they were defeated, they divided and revived from their places and advanced again.

[Notice from Elysion Observatory. Currently, due to the six beasts that have appeared on each continent, the number of victims in annihilated cities is es-estimated to be... about 160 million.]

"..."

[The deceased have all turned into golden starlight and disappeared into an unknown space, and we have barely stabilized the front line while activating all fate threads...!]

The world that countless people had been protecting while crying and laughing was rapidly disappearing with just one shake. It was leading the human world to destruction while ridiculously twisting the power that seemed like it could even stop gods, gathered with all

our might.

It felt like all our efforts were becoming bubbles.

Even if we used all our power to save just one life, tens of millions of lives disappeared absurdly.

Despair

Pain

Helplessness

That was the fate originally given to this world. So when we tried to lead it in the opposite direction, it resisted with all its might, and when we nudged it just slightly towards destruction, it tipped over like the wind.

I knew, but.

I felt like my heart would collapse as I felt the starlight diminishing along with people's return, but.

I barely pulled myself together.

"...Not yet."

-Leader! It looks like Galatea is barely holding on...?!

"Ichika, deal with the dragon of destruction together with everyone. I'll go to the moon first."

-Got it!!

Baaaaaag—!!

The magical girls including Ichika wrapped themselves in the blessings of [Harmony] and [Unity], and began the battle with the dragon of destruction that started earlier than expected on top of the ark balancing for emergency landing.

The dragon of destruction couldn't escape somewhere because it was blocking the ark's advance, but the same was true for the magical

girls. Even so, if they engaged in an honest firepower battle, it would be faster for the magical girls to overwhelm it in one go.

"Natasha, is there enough starlight to land on the moon?"

-Yes...! It's possible right now if there's no interference, but...!

"You don't need to push yourself. Please protect the ark from the dragon of destruction as much as possible."

-Are you planning to go down first?

"...Yes."

-I see.

It was a nonchalant response, but one containing Natasha's faith.

Sailors don't say goodbye.

Words taught by Nayeon and Natasha, who had memories of parents who went out to sea and never returned.

We believe.

Because we'll overcome everything like a miracle.

Because we're moving towards tomorrow, not destruction.

We will struggle to the end.

For a slightly better tomorrow.

I left the ark's power unit and flew towards the moon's surface wrapped in white starlight.

————!!

Silence

Vacuum

What I felt was darkness.

The dark space is so cold and painful that even magical girls can't endure for long without starlight.

I flew forward, leaving behind the magical girls on the ark continuing fierce battles in the space of [Harmony] and [Unity].

Becoming a single beam of light.

[Deception] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Cause and Effect Reversal

Kuung!

Successful landing.

With a slight impact on my legs, I felt the dusty gray plain.

I traversed in one breath with cause and effect reversal a distance that would have required adjusting orbit for a long time in space originally.

"..."

Earth was visible beyond.

Earth, which should have appeared blue due to the oceans, was surrounded by red and black energy. It had a color reminiscent of hell, which gave me chills. It was an even more unfamiliar and chilling shape than when looking at the sky from there.

Like a mass formed by clumps of blood drops.

From the red planet that seemed small enough to cover with a hand, I could feel countless people being sucked into the wounds of the star.

[Welcome. Reincarnation left by the first daughter.]

"..."

Yuki

A girl with a warm heart.

The chaotic divinity was imitating that face.

When in magical girl form, warm white like burning white flame, and when an ordinary girl, lovely appearance with short brown hair. It was imitating the cheeks shyly hidden by short hair and gently curving eyes when smiling.

Color of chaos

Perhaps unable to imitate Yuki's gentle color, the only difference was the confusing hair color that looked like all colors had been mixed and poured in.

[I am the final magical girl. The Magical Girl of [Stars].]

"..."

Chapter 151 : Despair (5)

[I see. So you're the one who came from another universe...]

[What do you know, muttering to yourself since earlier.]

[What do you mean? 'You' explained it.]

[What?]

[Ah, no. I got confused. It wasn't 'you' who said it.]

[...]

Why is the Magical Girl of [Stars] looking at me with a familiar expression?

Why is she showing goodwill while wearing the face of a gentle girl?

I couldn't guess at all the thoughts underlying that behavior.

Magical girls always carrying the seed of divinity were like this.

Animus,

[Death],

Erebos,

And Hecate before she got her name.

[Hmm, by the way, this 'you' is quite relaxed. Are you perhaps getting used to it too?]

[...]

The fragments born on this star with twisted fate all just muttered

their own words. Trapped in their own thoughts, ignoring others' thoughts, unable to even imagine being with others. They forced their terrible imaginations drawn out alone in their minds.

'Their thoughts weren't completely incomprehensible mysteries after all.'

Because they were beings originating from humans, even within their powerful authorities, they felt anxiety about the unstable world and limitations of their imperfect selves, and had things they desperately wished for in their hearts.

Animus who wanted humans to grow

[Death] who wanted the girl to realize

Erebos who wanted herself to survive

Hecate who wanted the order to succeed

And the three goddesses who wanted to return to the flow of stars and become daughters of the world again.

They all looked at the world through different perspectives, and advanced on twisted and distorted paths from their different positions. They didn't truly understand 'humans', but tried to create a 'world'.

World.

The world that magical girls carrying divinity should create.

'Even if we can't compromise, we decide on the best.'

Suddenly, I recalled the advice given by the dark blue crow.

What kind of world does this incomprehensible magical girl want to create?

Originally, I was going to attack with cause and effect reversal as soon as I recognized her existence, but recalling the four apostles that flashed through my mind, I asked the divinity calling herself the final

magical girl.

[What kind of world do you want to create?]

[...This is a first.]

[Answer.]

[Will you understand if I answer?]

[...]

[...Then I'll answer.]

It felt like I needed to know this to completely defeat the magical girl wrapped in chaotic power while representing the voice of the star.

[A world where we live as one with the star.]

It wasn't clumsy coexistence.

It didn't simply mean living on the same land facing each other like neighbors, nor did it mean living by drawing boundaries between each other's territories like animals and humans.

Complete unity.

It meant stealing human will completely, pushing everyone into the primordial chaos and nothingness claimed to be a perfect world, to seal the wounds.

[You really are a being with no relation to humans.]

[Yes, that's right. 'You' are the first to guess this too.]

[...]

A face exactly like Yuki's.

In the familiar expression of chaos answering as if we'd met before, though we never had, I recalled my first meeting with Yuki. Even in the memories I had preciously kept deep in my heart, Yuki had suddenly acted like she knew me too.

'...No way.'

I quietly looked at the Magical Girl of [Stars] while raising the power of cause and effect reversal. At the same time, the Magical Girl of [Stars] 'familiarly' took out a fragment of the world. She 'familiarly' deals with my unique skill that should be an unknown ability to beings she's meeting for the first time.

[You, you know what I'm trying to do, don't you?]

[This is also the first time 'you've' caught on to this.]

Eternal Return.

It was a massive miracle that a girl abandoned to gain a second chance in destruction.

A miracle that even the goddess of [Beginning] couldn't use carelessly and passed on using all sorts of deception.

A face resembling Yuki. Familiar use of Eternal Return.

It's unbelievable, but rather because of that, the identity of the Magical Girl of [Stars] becomes more convincing.

This one didn't come from the human era.

Guessing as a divinity affirming humanity's future, this one is a being born in a place unrelated to humans.

A being that arose after the silence of everyone's destruction.

[You... flowed in from the time of destruction?]

[...Yes.]

[You've been answering quite readily since earlier.]

[It's been nearly 20 days of repeated time for me. I can't keep my mouth shut and stay tense forever.]

[...]

Hearing those words gave me chills.

[And anyway, this star's fate is destined to return to one even across time and space.]

[I'll stop it.]

[You can't. Because I've already twisted one of the star's laws before you arrived.]

The Magical Girl of [Stars] smiled while looking at small fragments fluttering around. Amidst those fragments, faint sounds of sobbing and screams uttered by the goddess of plague could be heard.

-Aah...! No, this isn't it. I just...!!

They just wanted to return to the flow of stars.

That's all the evil gods wanted.

For that, they spewed curses that sacrificed countless people.

The unsightly end of one of the evil gods who spewed curses to interfere with humanity with their weakened bodies, and incited according to the will of stars for their own purposes.

A sacrifice for the world's miracle.

A massive miracle.

Our star began to shake.

The sky full of red atmosphere signifying the star's anger collapsed, the earth split, and incomparably more people's pain and despair than ever before could be heard.

Starlight was diminishing.

Despair was growing rapidly.

The light of hope was becoming smaller than a candle flame.

Even fate threads were breaking, and even magical girls'

communications were falling silent.

[Before you came, I already denied the land and sky divided by the first daughter, and dyed the surface where humans live with chaos.]

[...]

[Even now, the humans you loved so much are killing or abandoning each other to live just a little longer, just because the star's surface is being 'slightly' overturned.]

[...]

[Is there meaning in us fighting now? What you've protected until now has been blocked so simply.]

[...]

[This world is struggling to return to chaos like this, to the point of collapsing with such a simple will.]

[...]

[Leave.]

Gooooo—

As the Magical Girl of [Stars] waved her hand, a massive miracle originating from the will of stars was activated. A miracle that could finally be activated through the world's power recovered by the deaths of countless humans.

Power transcending dimensions.

Blue star.

Through the gate wrapped in chaotic starlight, that star gradually shrank and expanded into an incredibly familiar appearance. The expanded image gradually focused beyond a familiar country, familiar city, towards a familiar fruit shop in some rural area.

＜Hyeonwoo's Fruit Shop＞

There, an old woman with completely white hair and a limp in one leg was putting apples in a bag with a stiff expression. The smile she had always shown kindly to neighbors had completely vanished.

With an expressionless face, she handed the bag of apples to a customer, rummaged through the cash register to put away cash, then pulled a blanket from the corner of the shop and lay down listlessly.

On the cash register where she took out cash, photos of a middle-aged man and a young man smiling brightly were hung. The frame holding those photos was completely worn at the edges from being caressed so much.

Father and me.

And my living mother.

My heart was pounding as if it would burst completely, and tears poured from my eyes.

Seeing the red star full of screams and being dyed in chaos contrasted with the blue star where mother was calmly running the shop. It was so sad that tears came out.

Though I could feel the loss of divinity in real-time from the red star where people were dying, I couldn't take my eyes off the blue star where mother was lying.

If I take just ten steps forward, I can hug mother and shout that her son is alive.

I can lie down next to mother who has lost strength from old age and shout that I'm sorry for leaving her alone.

I can start a new life as an ordinary girl in that Earth I know.

[Leave this star.]

[...]

[Most of the miracles originating from the will of stars you possess

will disappear in another dimension, but at least you can live as a human in the place you were.]

[Hu...man.]

[Yes. Fate determined while a star orbits the sun billions of times cannot be defied.]

The years that humans appeared on the star and created.

The years that started from the era of goddesses and humans.

[It's just one day out of a year at most.]

From the star's perspective, it was an extremely fleeting and short, futile time.

Billions of years of chaos

Tens of thousands of years of history

The weight of years determining fate was different,

The scale at which fate was determined was different.s and goddesses are just bubbles that briefly rise from nothingness and return to nothingness after all.

[This is natural.]

[...]

I too was a small human agonizing as a mother's son, not a goddess of stars.

[Go.]

[...]

The star's fate cannot be defied.

[...]

[...]

Is that really so?

I spat out a question that arose from indignation amidst flowing tears.

While watching mother's back, I forcibly grasped and covered my heart pounding as if it would explode, and bit my lips that felt like screaming from sadness until they bled. I forcibly twisted and fixed my trembling legs, and tensed my endlessly shaking arms until veins popped out.

Barely holding back my body trying to flee hastily through the gate in front of despair.

I shouted at the Magical Girl of [Stars] and the will of stars.

[Then why... are you trying to persuade me like this? If it doesn't matter what I do, why are you trying to send me back?]

[...Huh?]

[If the difference is so overwhelming, why couldn't you wait for humans to naturally perish?]

[...]

[You said human history is just a day!! Why couldn't you wait even about a week!!]

[...]

Ah

I see.

[You are not the will of stars.]

[You are not truly representing the indescribable, great will of stars.]

[You too are just 'fake gods' trapped in your own stubbornness.]

Hearing those words, the Magical Girl of [Stars] showed a cold expression for the first time.

I think I understand why you were upset.

If someone wrote a terrible story that drives humans into a corner and sneers that this is human nature.

[That's you.]

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[You're not the will of stars... you too are just fragments of the star.]

[...]

[Were you so afraid that you wanted to send me back that badly?]

I understand now.

The goddesses who became so weak that they tormented humans with curses.

And you who try to seal wounds with ridiculous grand violence called the ritual of return.

You're not omnipotent beings deciding the direction of this world.

You're not absolute beings announcing the end of this world.

The world is still alive.

You're just using deception while hoping the world will die.

[Hope] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Flow of All Things

Everything flows and changes.

I shouted to everyone still fighting on the red-dyed surface of the star.

To all those still shining like candles while believing in each other amidst unreasonable curses, unreasonable miracles, and unreasonable violence.

[The 'Goddess of Hope' announces to all people living on this star!!]

[Our fight is not over yet!!]

[The future of humanity is not over yet!!]

Responding to my voice, very faint starlights revived.

Though diminished to the point where it could no longer be called infinite, there was still enough left for one massive miracle.

As power affirming the human world flowed from my halo, it prevented the collapse of sky and earth, and transmitted protection to imbue warmth to all those trying to protect the human realm.

[Haah, so we end up fighting like this after all.]

As the Magical Girl of [Stars] waved her hand once, the gate that had been reflecting mother's listless back like a mirror until just now closed. At the same time, a pain like being stabbed with an awl came to my chest, but I didn't show it.

'I'm sorry, mother. Please wait... just a little longer.'

The Magical Girl of [Stars] took out another fragment of a goddess from her bosom, and as soon as I confirmed it, I created and threw a white shooting star. The brilliant white starlight approached the barren gray earth and created a massive explosion with countless dust clouds.

Faaaash—!!

[Stars] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Eternal Return

The Magical Girl of [Stars] didn't try to go back in time, but tried to complete the miracle using the goddess fragment while recovering her body. Unlike her relaxed attitude until now, she had changed to an extremely cautious and careful attitude.

Those wielding enormous authority all take an extremely

conservative attitude when things go beyond their expectations. Probably because the things happening from now on are things she hadn't experienced during her returns.

'Was it all deception?'

But the feeling of despair from the Earth burning with red and chaos was real.

Humanity's destruction.

Magical girls' defeat.

What's the reason she can't show composure as if she's achieved her goal even now when these are right before her eyes? Her ability born from the star cannot be imitated by the Flow of All Things that can only protect the human realm.

'No, I myself defined them as not being gods of the star.'

Magical Girl of Chaos

Magical Girl of [Stars]

She said she came across dimensions from a time when destruction was already certain.

It was also strange that a magical girl was born out of nowhere after everything returned to chaos.

'Your true nature is...'

Appearance resembling Yuki.

Yuki was the magical girl who remained until the very end in the destroyed world.

'No way.'

I deployed the most threatening unique skills I could against the Magical Girl of [Stars]. Although I couldn't use the power of Flow of All Things on the moon outside the human realm, the abilities of the

girls still fighting the dragon of destruction while believing in me were enough.

Free World

Imitating the green starlight of the girl who swings her fist connecting present and past while dreaming of freedom, I created a white goddess's fist. A massive avatar of the white goddess appeared and swung her fist towards the Magical Girl of [Stars] hurriedly preparing a miracle.

Rushing white fist

Pillar of light

Baaaang——!!

[Stars] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Idol Manifestation

Soldiers from old myths wrapped in chaotic starlight appeared and took the punch instead, and the massive white goddess charged towards the chaos soldiers and swung her fist once again. As the lunar plains were carved away, and summoned beings lost their balance and flew further than on Earth each time they attacked each other in the vacuum where no sound could be heard.

"Animus..."

I deployed another unique skill in the lunar plains that had instantly become a chaotic battlefield.

What I deploy is the flame of the girl who loved me.

Recalling her warm touch and gentle smile.

I poured out lotus flowers containing true flames to this fake divinity who dared imitate her noble face.

White flowers of love

White beyond red.

The flower buds hundreds of meters in size that bloomed over the battlefield split into thousands of petals as they fell towards where hundreds of soldiers and the white goddess were fighting. The dazzlingly burning petals fluttered down and blocked all directions the Magical Girl of [Stars] tried to advance, and finally she was completely surrounded by petals and burned without leaving even ashes.

[Kugh?!]

But the Magical Girl of [Stars] who barely revived with Eternal Return hastily retreated and emitted a beam of light towards me. It was the scream of countless souls trapped in one body.

Massive white beam

Plague's strike.

"...Erebos."

After blowing away that strike completely with Sumire's unique skill Violet Blade Storm, I summoned Himari's unique skill surgical tools and Hana's unique skill Milky Way, and attacked the Magical Girl of [Stars].

[This is why head-on battles are...!]

The Magical Girl of [Stars] poured out unique skills of 2-star magical girls that I had 'seen somewhere' but were 'weaker than the current ones', and blocked those attacks.

White starlight and chaotic starlight intertwined in hundreds of ways, illuminating the barren lunar plains.

Only after seeing all of those did I feel like I knew the identity of the Magical Girl of [Stars].

Not the unique skills of apostles who had bloomed into divinity, but the unique skills of apostles when they were 3-star.

Unique skills with firepower vastly inferior to current magical girls.

The Magical Girl of [Stars] was chaos grown from the remaining starlight of magical girls in the destroyed world.

A divinity born from the starlight of magical girls that had melted into chaos, the memory of destruction that Erebos shot while cursing the goddesses, and the ritual created by the three goddesses to summon a massive curse existing in another universe.

A glass star born after the history of destruction.

The turbid color of chaos contrasting with white that gathered all brilliant lights.

A magical girl who witnessed the true extinction of humans on a star where even Yuki had disappeared.

[You too were a divinity belonging to human history.]

[No, I'm from the chaos of stars...]

[Then I define you as the first human who witnessed you.]

[What are you saying? You don't even know that time period.]

[No, I saw it.]

The Shim Hyun-woo living in my soul saw it.

The record of the destroyed world.

The outrage of unreasonable fragments.

The soul of an ordinary human who witnessed history is alive in me.

Like human history that defined the three goddesses, the perception of an ordinary human who witnessed destruction.

The birth of divinity.

It is made from the hearts of humans who feared something in history.

Then as a witness who saw the sacrifice of magical girls who feared while seeing the record of destruction and unknowingly gave birth to a new divinity, I will define you.

As an ordinary human.

I, Shim Hyun-woo, will be the final recorder who recorded the false divinity born in the destroyed world.

I will call the final goddess like this.

"Nyx."

The first night. Goddess of chaos. Darkness that is terrifying beyond measure.

You are not an unknown being born alone on a star.

You are a human descendant born from fragments of countless girls.

Your time is no longer disconnected from our time.

The Magical Girl of [Stars] was a being that had assimilated with the star and transcended the human world, but at this moment, she was incorporated into human history in a different way.

[What meaning is there in this action.]

[There is meaning, of course.]

If you have become a divinity belonging to the human realm.

I can now use your abilities.

I will receive and use that power handed down by goddesses, abandoned by girls, and salvaged from chaos.

Human history that has overcome destruction will pass even the outrage of stars as one past.

If the time of stars is connected across space, human time is now connected across space too. The world's power was unstable due to repeated rewinding, but we always found hope in an uncertain

tomorrow.

[Hope] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Eternal Return

[No!!!]

Within dazzlingly shining white starlight.

The Magical Girl of [Stars] wailed as she saw the flow of stars breaking, and chaos disappeared from the star dyed in chaos, and humans who died in trials revived.

I rewound time as much as I could rewind.

And so—

I returned to before the ark was launched.

Chapter 153 : The World of Stars and Humans (1)

[Return, return, return...]

Outside the tightly closed window, the march of countless beasts continues with chilling voices. The wall separating the black beasts from people hiding in houses is so thin that the two siblings who always used to growl are now huddled together, feeling only helpless fear in the face of death that has come right before their eyes.

Bang!

Bang!

Vibrations felt

[Return.]

[Return.]

[Return.]

The black beasts entered the human realm, breaking down the walls of houses with their dirty front paws, and the golden will contained in the low muttering was pulling at people's souls. The two siblings were being crushed by the helplessness slowly invading their minds and the weight of predetermined fate.

"Eek...?!"

"B-Brother, what do we do?!"

Their minds grow hazy with the voice that steals reason and returns human souls to the flow of stars.

[Return.]

[Return.]

[Return.]

What's the point of living?

When human life is so light and utterly futile anyway.

"Return..."

"Return..."

The two siblings reached out towards dozens of lions climbing over the wall with dazed eyes.

The distance between the lions and the two siblings gradually narrowing.

Between them, the armor's machine gun spewed fire and drove away the lions.

Dudududududu—!!

A massive shadow appearing in the sky above the residential area.

The machine gun fired with ivory starlight instantly blew away the lions that had invaded the siblings' home. As the lions disappeared from the machine gun, the siblings who regained their senses realized what they had been about to do and turned pale.

They had almost let go of the life they had desperately lived until now with just one whisper from the star.

They had been about to let go of the thread of obvious reality, enchanted by fear and unreasonable fate.

"W-What were we about to do just now?!"

"...I must have gone crazy."

[Don't be deceived!!]

In the sky the siblings looked back at, an armor shining dazzlingly in various colors was floating majestically. The massive armor that could completely cover dozens of houses in the residential area just by its size had fully deployed countless weapons from the weapon container on its back.

Kohane, riding the armor in its final form, was grateful for the chance that had come again.

[I'm glad I could protect them this time...!!]

Sudden attack of demons.

In the past time, she had eventually faced and fought the giant black lion, but realizing it had been too late. Countless people had already been sucked into the lions, and finally as the sky and earth flipped over, Kohane's vision was dyed in darkness.

A white miracle felt at some point.

Dazzling starlight passed by, blurring her vision, and she returned to the day before again.

-We've... come back...!

This time, she protected those siblings without being enchanted by the voices of stars. And she was protecting everyone so that no one would die, together with her friends. Even now, magical girls maintaining a tight balance against lions attacking shelters every moment.

[Kohane!! According to memory, a large demon will appear on that riverbank from now!! Be careful!!]

"I know, Rena."

They could maintain perfection beyond their best against the unreasonable outrage of stars.

Miracle.

It could only be explained as a miracle.

As much as the star's curse unreasonably drove humans into a corner, the miracle of the white goddess who loved humans was protecting their world so it could be protected.

As much as the sudden outrage of fate, the sudden love of the goddess made them not give up on a perfect tomorrow.

The light that didn't break in despair burned more brilliantly in hope.

Kohane fired countless weapons while sending the armor up into the sky. Recalling thousands of joys, thousands of exultations, and thousands of encounters. She fired innumerable starlight from the massive armor, reminiscent of a rainbow.

-There were many sacrifices, but the magical girls defeated the demons and won!

Don't be ridiculous.

The hope we dream of is not such a compromise.

Magical girls protect everyone from everything.

[I won't let anyone die!!]

Humanity's hope.

The respected superior of Earth Federation's ace pilot and the nightmare of the Mars Empire threatening humanity.

The final armor created by Kohane will be everyone's hope.

Crack!

Kohane, burning her will that didn't break even in unreasonable fate more brilliantly, pressed the red button protected by glass for perfection beyond happiness.

-Initiating final battle sequence-

Countless weapons deployed from the armor were fired according to the autonomous support system, literally erasing the black demons

spreading in Tokyo.

[This time... I'll protect everyone!!]

[Because armor is completed!! With a burning heart!!]

[I will absolutely protect all people with burning hearts!!]

Our story towards perfection.

The armor flying like the sun shining in the sky above Tokyo.

"...Amazing."

"Yeah! Do your best!! Magical girl!!"

"Thank you!! Magical Girl of Armor!!"

Countless people looking at the massive armor perfectly protecting people from black lions no longer wavered at the demons' voices.

They turned their eyes from the stories of gods and looked at the sparkle of human girls.

Not despairing from the outrage of stars,

They began to look again at the sparkle of magical girls trying to protect humans.

* * *

"Get a grip!"

"Ugh, the shelter door is barely holding, will this be okay?"

"If they break in, we'll have to run without looking back."

Mrs. Kim said this inside the shelter, but she was just as anxious inside. She had seen sea serpents melting the shelter's main gate with poison since earlier, and it was about to open completely corroded.

'There are many places to escape to right in front of the market, but...'

Not a few people would be caught by demons in the process of escaping. It would probably be impossible for everyone to escape to the market without dying and barricade themselves in.

Even so, they couldn't give up.

'Even if there are sacrifices...'

Mrs. Kim tried to steel her heart.

She intended to save as many people as possible, even if it meant slapping people's cheeks with her pot lid-like hands to urge them on if necessary.

But then.

Baaaang—!!

The gate opened with a roar.

"Eek?!"

"W-What is it?!"

"...Nayeon?"

Blue starlight

Magical Girl of the Sea

What broke through the gate was not creepy black snakes, but a magical girl summoning waves while fluttering a blue dress. The sea serpents that had been melting the shelter door until just now were instantly swept away far away by the seawater she summoned.

[Retur...]

Due to the distance from the demons that suddenly became distant, the thousands of people hiding in the shelter couldn't even hear what the demons were muttering.

The people who were hurriedly preparing to flee inside the shelter heard a girl's shout.

"This time I won't let anyone dieee!!"

The girl who came in shining blue starlight all over her body arrogantly declared.

That she would perfectly overcome fate, unreasonable curses.

"Everyone!! Don't listen to what those things say!! Magical girls will absolutely!! Absolutely not let people dieee!!!!"

Voice filled with resentment. Face contorted with tears.

Her daughter's declaration that she would perfectly overcome even unreasonable fate.

Mrs. Kim felt her heart swell seeing that sight.

'Our baby has grown up so much.'

* * *

Misaki Maegamen couldn't take her eyes off the scene unfolding before her. The demons that had just been breaking down the shelter door and rushing to tempt hundreds of people had all fallen. Surgical tools that swept in like ginkgo leaves fluttering in autumn wind had cut off the demons' limbs and turned them to powder.

Whirrrrr—

Himari put away the electric saw still emitting residual heat and asked for people's understanding.

"...Excuse me. There was a sudden demon attack... Please follow the guard corps' guidance to the next shelter."

Elegant gold

Pure white nurse

Apron stained with demons' blood

Thump thump thump

Misaki felt her creator's soul boiling at the sight of the Magical Girl of [Nursing] who had perfectly protected 'all people' from black lions.

The voices of demons muttering something while shooting golden starlight until just now completely disappeared under the sparkle of the magical girl.

'Would it be rude to ask if I can use her as a doll... model?'

Because the situation inside the shelter was quickly sorted out, enough of Misaki's reason remained to restrain her instincts. Misaki quietly bowed her head to Himari in gratitude, and was about to move towards where the guard corps said they would bring evacuation buses.

An elegant yet calm voice called out to Misaki.

"Ah, that lady over there."

"Yes?"

"You said you make dolls, right?"

"Ah, yes."

Misaki Maegamen's mind went blank.

What should I do

Did she see 'that' by any chance?

No, I worked with my face covered.

And 'that' can't be bought without adult verification...

Should I say I only make wholesome dolls now?

As all sorts of thoughts rushed in, Himari smiled slightly and answered.

The innermost thoughts she couldn't say at that tense time when everyone in the shelter died and only Misaki escaped.

"Fufu, I liked playing with dolls since I was young too. I look forward to your work."

"Ah, ah... yes. I'll do my best."

"Then please hurry and evacuate."

"...Yes."

Himari remembered that woman trembling on the roadside was the only one who successfully escaped from the shelter.

This time she protected everyone.

Against the star's outrage, with the goddess's miracle.

For a tomorrow that never compromises.

'There's no time to spare.'

Himari was about to head to the next shelter to save people she couldn't protect in the erased time. White snowflakes were falling under the red sky.

"...Snow?"

Looking closely, it was white starlight gathering and falling.

Tiny white starlights were falling from the red sky like large snowflakes, embracing the land of humans.

[Hope] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Flow of All Things

It changes.

The world changes following the glass star that escaped from the star's fate.

It resists.

It resists against the unreasonable outrage of fake gods.

The final miracle bestowed by the Goddess of [Hope].

They were resisting the destruction of human land by digging into the slowly gathering chaos.

White starlight fell like snow onto the heads of all those living on human land.

Not collapsing earth and disappearing sky.

Everyone looked at the moon.

The fierce battle of two goddesses changing fate across time was still continuing even now.

* * *

After endless rewinding, memories of past time accumulated even in the magical girls influenced by me to the extent that they remembered. In accumulating memories, they made better and better choices to paint a future where not a single person dies.

To the point where not even a handful of people could be absorbed by the whispers of the massive trial demons.

To the point where I could find a way to reach the moon before the Magical Girl of [Stars] could try something.

After using authorities endlessly blocking each other's way.

Finally, we faced each other again at the center of time.

[How is it? The feeling of fighting in front of an unreasonable miracle. The people of this world have been fighting in a world twisted by such authority.]

[...If this continues, the flow of stars will be completely distorted.]

[No, more precisely, it can't become the complete chaos you want.]

[...]

[I won't let stars and gods interfere with humans anymore.]

The time that the Magical Girl of [Stars] and I rewound over and over became so unstable that it was difficult to rewind even 1 minute. The flow of stars was shaking and endlessly pouring out hatred for humanity from its wounds.

The largest fragment of the star wanted to return to complete chaos.

What they call the will of stars was despairing under the throne of nothingness.

Chapter 154 : The World of Stars and Humans (2)

-Successfully launched temporary warp anchor on the lunar surface!

"Then we'll be coming now."

"Yes, let's all go to the deck."

After confirming that Hikari had plunged onto the lunar surface through a small warp gate, Yuki headed to the deck where the dragon of destruction would soon come to interfere, along with all the magical girls. The timing was slightly different in repeating memories, but the dragon of destruction always prevented the ark from landing on the moon.

'Probably they have no means to stop the ark except for the dragon.'

At first, they despaired at the method of the Magical Girl of [Stars], who led them too easily to the path of destruction by using her authority suddenly, but humanity also had a magical girl who could use enormous authority to overturn all situations.

"Hey Shikishima! Let's go!"

"Yeah. Let's go."

Ichika patted her shoulder.

Magical girls gathered on the stairs going up to the deck.

"I'll plunge in first and unfold a space of harmony for you all."

"...Li Meilin, are you not scared anymore?"

"Huhu."

Li Meilin, who had always followed Li Na's lead while trembling in a corner, now took the lead more bravely than anyone.

"I'm still... scared, but now I can see it."

Hope

The hope that we can protect this world.

Faith that the white magical girl will hold us firmly so we won't be helplessly swept away by unreasonable fate.

Confidence that for the first time we're completely resisting the outrage of gods and stars, preventing them from playing any tricks.

Excitement that we're running towards a perfect ending beyond our best.

"Funnily enough, those feelings are now welling up more than the tension of battle."

"Phew... you move me at the last moment! Meilin!"

"Whoa?! B-But I always came out to battle without complaint!"

"It was all written on your face that you didn't want to and were scared!"

Li Na stroked Meilin's head, moved by the cowardly Meilin's articulate words. Seeing this, everyone didn't laugh out loud, but surprisingly, they were smiling in the face of another huge battle. Even the most taciturn Hecate was quietly bowing her head and smiling.

Is it arrogance?

Is it carelessness?

Is it relief at the situation where we've finally become free from the outrage of fake gods and stars unreasonably throwing curses and authority at some point, and just need to defeat demons originating from the star's pus as magical girls?

Smiling in battle was something Yuki couldn't even imagine.

'Hikari...!'

In the miracle created by the girl everyone loves, we advance towards a battle we can't help but win. The tomorrow that was no longer visible, hidden in unreasonable darkness, was gradually becoming visible beyond.

Light.

Light was finally visible after passing through a dark, long tunnel.

"Everyone, do your best!!"

"I'll deploy it."

As they climbed onto the deck of the ark, Meilin and Laura deployed starlight in bamboo and wheat field colors, and the space of the universe instantly felt peaceful.

"We'll win like meteors!"

"Doesn't that mean we'll fall?"

"Uuugh! That's mean!"

Ichika and Hana advanced to the front with confident smiles.

"Somehow... I feel like we can't help but win."

"Hmm, I feel the same."

Chen Lihua and Hecate each take out lightning and a bow, securing good positions for attack.

"..."

Sumire looked at all this scenery and recalled the day when the council was established long ago.

"We're going to win."

Yuki walks between them.

To fight at the very front.

So that girl who's holding the magical girls from falling to fate can run faster than anyone. Now stars and fake gods will be caught by one girl and unable to do anything.

What passes over their heads is the universe watched by countless stars.

With the power of goddesses, stars, and miracles.

Towards the most perfect victory.

As magical girls who have escaped distorted fate, they face demons in an undetermined fate for the first time.

Yuki declares.

"In the name of love!! And hope!!"

The dragon of destruction that once faced them flying in the sky on the day they despaired, and destroyed the ark on the day it made them despair a second time, approaches.

[Return to the chaos of stars!!]

A dragon whose undulating tail is like mountain ranges pulled from stars and dancing, with chaotic eyes embedded in its wings and all over its scales spewing chilling malice.

The final trial that harvests all human souls with a curse that seems to make one lose starlight just by approaching.

Though they've faced it many times in accumulated memories, they ultimately failed due to interference from the Magical Girl of [Stars] without Hikari's help.

Sometimes they arrived on the moon too late.

Sometimes an unreasonable miracle approached and ruined

everything.

[Return to chaos!!]

Harvester of stars.

Agent of destruction.

Though it's a more terrifying enemy than any trial demon, the magical girls who came up to the deck were smiling.

Because in a world stripped of all gods' malice, demons are no match for magical girls.

[Face the predetermined destruction!!]

Because the fate of our world has now changed.

"Magical girls!! Definitely win!!"

Because

Magical girls are girls who perfectly protect everyone.

Because 'we' decided so.

Yuki, with love for the girl who saved this star's humans from gods.

Made lotus flowers bloom on both palms.

Placing one memory in one petal.

Placing the memory of shining days spent with you in another petal.

Placing faith towards the great girl in yet another petal.

She made a flame flower bloom large enough to push back the dragon of destruction over the massive ark heading to the moon.

Faaaash!!

Black and white energies intertwine chaotically, slowly pushing back the beast of destruction.

Yuki's story may start miserably and full of mistakes, continue cowardly and meanly, and finally end as deception that overcomes everything.

[■■■■■■!!!]

The massive dragon opens its mouth that devours everything and spews black energy towards the ark.

Chaotic starlight that devours everything.

Tens of thousands of pairs of eyes between its open mouth glared at the magical girls with ominous light, and the chaotic energy approached to destroy the ark stronger than ever before. That light was like a massive pillar crashing down on the magical girls.

As the pillar of chaos approached, Ichika and Hana blocked its front.

"Arahan Swordsman Fist!!"

"Let's block it with starlight!!"

Thousands of fists filled with chivalry created by the green giant, and between them, the yellow Milky Way running faster than anyone spreads out and clashes with the pillar of chaos.

"I'll support!!"

"I'll help."

Yellow lightning and silver-white arrows spread in hundreds of branches, filtering out the pillar of chaos. Like roots enveloping soil, they wrap the pillar of chaos with magical girls' starlight.

"We'll definitely win! I'm not scared at all!!"

"Yeah! That's right!"

"I agree."

"Haha! Of course!"

A refreshing bamboo-colored energy spreads out, gently wrapping the

girls from the energy of chaos and space. The wheat field-colored energy seeps under the ark's deck, helping the magical girls' will not to waver and to listen to each other's stories.

"Perhaps... we'll really win."

Countless violet irises bloom, becoming thousands and tens of thousands of blades fired towards the dragon of destruction.

Their fate spreading in chaos advances towards tomorrow.

It flows into unpredictable human time following the goddess's guidance while diverging from the fate determined by the strongest fragment of the star.

From this moment, the era of gods and stars comes to an end.

[■■■■■——!!!]

The dragon of destruction, pushed back by numerous starlights, rushes in again from the dark space, spewing chaotic energy from countless eyes.

A demon without unreasonable fate,

Without cowardly deception,

Without filthy curses.

It was just one massive beast.

'Hikari.'

For the first time, Yuki came to see demons not as unknown enemies, but as shadows of a fading era.

They were very unsightly and filthy dregs.

No longer the vanguard of gods wielding frightening and unknowable fate and power.

Everything was seen through by a dazzling beam of white light that came one day.

"Magical girls absolutely don't lose."

The magical girl who had fought for the longest time and dreamed of light for the longest time stretched both hands towards the dragon of destruction. What was contained in those hands was only certainty.

[It's not over yet!! You can't escape the fate of destruction!!]

Along with the desperate cry of the Magical Girl of [Stars].

Towards the slowly retreating dragon of destruction, an unidentifiable massive force approached from the throne of nothingness and transmitted power incomparable to anything so far.

The dragon of destruction, wrapped in massive power again, emitting energy as if to completely grind the ark.

The power that the magical girls and Yuki were barely pushing back slowly retreats again.

[■■■■■■!!!]

"..."

Originally, they should give up to the unreasonable fate that has come again.

But for some reason, Yuki wasn't afraid of any of it at all.

"Yuki."

Because there was a girl holding her outstretched hands from behind.

"Sorry, it struggled a bit at the end."

"Struggled?"

"I opened the door towards the era of destruction."

"Huhu. That's a big deal."

"It is."

But the conversation between the two girls was utterly relaxed.

It's really foolish, but.

Because now they could only see real hope.

Because it felt like they could overcome anything that happened.

Because they felt the world's fate had changed, they stood before the dragon of destruction, laughing vigorously.

"Now, now it's really the end."

"It is."

"We can win."

"I believe it."

True faith came with peace.

Chapter 155 : The World of Stars and Humans (3)

[This can't be... th-this.]

[This is the reality of what you called fate. It seems to determine everything, but it's surprisingly fragile.]

[Fate is not something that changes!!]

[No, it changes.]

The demons that devoured countless souls were stopped by the magical girls' counterattack through regression.

I approached the Magical Girl of [Stars]... Nyx, faster than anyone without giving her a chance to use a miracle.

The perfect ending she tried to reach through regression.

The Magical Girl of [Stars] whose every move was blocked.

Nyx, who opened a dimension connected to the throne of nothingness using fragments of the three goddesses as a last struggle, was just sitting on the ground. She, who was only allowed to exist from a predetermined future, was slowly losing her divinity.

Though I poured the unreasonable miracles we had experienced so far onto those representing the will of stars, somehow I didn't feel very satisfied.

'Now you'll finally listen.'

The will of stars, having lost all its minions, was writhing and suffering in countless repeated regressions. The flow of stars was also distorted due to the numerous miracles used by me and Nyx. That's

why it tried to recover its wounds by endlessly absorbing chaos from the opened gate of destruction.

'The connection is too strong to close the gate.'

To shout "We won!" and end it... too many things maintaining the foundation of this world have been broken.

I looked up at the gate of destruction connected to the throne of nothingness.

The dimension that was this star's predetermined future, which Nyx had crossed over.

The gate of chaos.

It was still spewing massive chaotic energy without closing, even though we had changed fate with our hands. If we're not careful, a second Nyx or chaotic beings might be born, turning this world into endless chaos once again.

[I... I can only exist in chaos.]

[Then go back to the era of destruction.]

[...]

[Can't you go?]

[...]

[Whatever you've done, I've blocked it all, and whatever you're thinking of doing, I can block it all. So just disappear from this world without caring.]

[Having received memories from this dimension, I've become a foreign substance and can't return.]

[Yes, that's why you tried to turn this star into chaos.]

[...W-Why don't you seal me right away?]

[Did I seal you when you regressed?]

Nyx quietly nodded.

With even the last miracle of regression blocked, she was despairing over what would happen to her from now on.

'Haah... these fake gods are all timid and petty.'

Just like me.

Probably because they are beings originating from human hearts.

Because they are beings born from receiving human hearts as the largest fragments that fell from the star, they only have distorted and biased emotions they watched according to the era they lived in.

Nyx, born in the era when humans were extinct, is the most biased towards the star's recovery among them.

I answered Nyx's words.

[Then it was probably because I wasn't confident I could block everything of yours.]

[Now...]

[I'm not afraid of the will of stars or you at all. You fake gods.]

[...]

[Do you want the star's wounds to heal?]

[...Yes.]

The sin created by the first humans.

As the flow of this star twisted, the history of modern humans as we know it began, and fake divinities influenced by human hearts changed according to the times within it, eventually becoming chaos trying to end everything and return.

The wound that could originally be sealed through human extinction was shaking and refusing to be sealed due to the opened gate of destruction and endlessly consumed miracles. It was clear that the

longer the gate connected to a future that shouldn't exist continued, the worse influence it would have on this world.

Is this how someone feels when they have to take away spoons in front of a possessed person?

[...]

In fact, one method existed.

A way to completely end the era of stars and gods, seal the star's wounds, and end the appearance of demons.

To block the wound with the power of a massive world, allowing the connection with the gate of destruction to be cut off. And then wait until the flow of stars stabilizes and recovers.

The problem is... only I can do it.

The three goddesses have long been suppressed by Nyx and sealed as star fragments.

Nyx is a god biased towards chaos, so she might accidentally make the gate of destruction go out of control.

And it will probably require an eternal time that can't be measured by human years, I guarantee.

I can't go home if I try to sort out this chaos.

I can't leave this star.

[...]

I still can't forget the sight of mother beyond the gate I saw in my first meeting with Nyx.

Yuki, who had completely landed the ark on the moon, approached me as I was pondering this.

The other magical girls were finishing preparations to seal the throne of nothingness where all gates were closed, as planned.

"Hikari."

[Yuki.]

"That... person."

[Yeah.]

The Magical Girl of [Stars].

A goddess born in the time of destruction you returned from.

"...I see. You who received our memories and were born."

[...]

Memories of destruction. Fragments of magical girls Erebos salvaged from chaos.

Somehow, recalling those, a way to use this troublemaker without sealing her came to mind.

[Nyx, do you want to return to this star's flow?]

[It's impossible. I can't exist without complete chaos. Just like the three goddesses at the boundary of dimensions...]

[Give me the memories of magical girls that form the basis of your personality.]

[What?]

[Then you'll return to being a pure glass star. I'll send you back in that state.]

[...]

The loss of personality is no different from losing existence entirely from a human perspective, but from the star's perspective, it's just a change of state. I proposed to her to return her existence and go back to her original dimension as an inanimate object.

[B-But the will of stars...]

[I'll heal it.]

Ah, I said it.

At the same time, I unconsciously confirmed that my resolve was already set.

The gate Nyx showed me seeming like the only remaining method was probably because my vision had narrowed due to despair, in retrospect.

'I can find a way. We can move towards a better future.'

We will definitely become happy.

Didn't we decide to believe so?

I will find a way to return to mother while healing the star's wounds for this world.

[...Alright.]

Perhaps accepting the sincerity felt from my words, Nyx slowly returned to chaotic starlight and gave up on the help the will of stars had requested. Golden energy flowed out of her body and into my hands, and within it were engraved memories experienced by thousands of magical girls who lived in the destroyed world.

Memories of girls dragged into this world by Erebos.

Perhaps the true protagonists of <Magical Girl HAZARD>.

I preciously embraced their memories. Within them, the flame of eternal return that Yuki had abandoned was also alive and breathing.

'I'll put you at ease. Wait.'

Though releasing them into the world would only bring confusion because there are girls living in the current era, I will definitely find a perfect ending so that they too can be rewarded someday.

Because I decided so.

Because I promised to restore what was unfairly taken from god more perfectly than anyone.

Clink

[So this is Nyx.]

"A glass star of chaos."

As I and Yuki muttered, Nyx's essence was a glass star created by the intertwining of starlight left behind by countless magical girls and chaos.

A chaotic color as if all kinds of paint were poured in.

The color possessed by a divinity that tried to open the era of stars at the boundary of stars and humans was as alien as that thought.

[Nyx, go back.]

I picked it up and threw it towards the gate of destruction that was still open.

Whoosh

Like garbage returning to a trash can.

Nyx returned to her original dimension in an utterly futile way.

The will of stars, which had been eavesdropping on our conversation, was endlessly shaking in the depths of the moon, watching all this.

Now it's time to fix this broken world and end the era of stars.

[...]

"..."

Yuki and I looked into the gate of destruction silently for a while.

For Yuki, the familiar sky of destruction she had once seen.

For me, the last thing I have to do from now on.

We were accepting the final moment with different thoughts.

"Now... it's over."

[Yeah.]

"Are you going back?"

[No.]

"What?!"

Yuki looked at me, startled.

In those shaking eyes, numerous resolutions were shaking together.

My hero

My idol

My magical girl

The real magical girl

[...]

I looked at Yuki's surprised face for a moment, as it was also incomparably noble.

Probably because I won't see it for a long time.

[I can't go back right away. I have to fix this star from now on.]

"Fix... it?"

[Yeah, to completely close the gate of destruction and seal the throne of nothingness, someone has to seal it in the flow of stars until the wound heals.]

"Th-That's... like."

Being sealed.

But Yuki seemed to swallow those words, feeling like she really wouldn't see me forever if she uttered them.

She seemed to feel guilty at the thought that only I would be bound on the tomorrow that seemed like it would be the most brilliant and perfect.

[Yuki, you promised me, right?]

"Pro...mise."

[Until I return to my original world and come back, you'd become an excellent magical girl who can endure...]

"...That we'd definitely meet again."

As soon as we said those words, we hugged each other again like back then.

Softness

Warmth

Coziness

Memories

Faith

Dreams

What should we call that sensation that seems to be made only of the kindest things in this world?

With this feeling, I felt like I could accomplish the impossible task of sealing the star's wounds, returning to mother, and coming back to Yuki again.

Yuki looked at me with tears in her eyes in my arms.

The cover of <Magical Girl HAZARD> Volume 5.

My favorite novel.

It resembled that cover, but those eyes were looking at me, not emptiness or destruction.

The protagonist of the story I loved most was looking at me.

Tears

Red ribbon

Short hair swaying.

A warm scent.

A scent resembling acacia.

The scent from a corner of rabbit pajamas.

Two hands held in an old small room.

Warm

Flame

She whispered something in my ear.

[...Yeah.]

I could only nod to those words, because to answer that whisper, I had to solve all the difficult tasks and be in a completely free state.

[Hope] Magical Girl's Unique Skill

Flow of All Things

Finally, to change this world, I dyed my whole body in white light.

Time

Space

Fate

Dreams

To return them all to you.

To regain my perfect ending.

The barren lunar surface was filling with white flashes.

Seeing that sight and sensing something, the companions all rushed over with urgent faces.

"Leader?!"

"Hikari-chan!!"

"Hikari-san!!"

I engraved greetings on their glass stars so they could hear anytime.

-Ichika, being able to save you at the laboratory that day is my great pride.

-Hana, thank you for becoming my friend. Because of you, my weak self could change.

-Sumire, thank you for always believing in my words and following me, I'll remember the strength of a noble magical girl.

-Hecate, I hope you'll live for your own happiness now, not orders. You can do it now.

To Chen Lihua, to Li Meilin, to Laura, to Kang Dorim, to Park Saebyeok, to Himari, to Chloe, to Haruko, to Li Na, to Ella, to Hong Nayeon, to Alisa, to Cho Yeonseo, to Iris...

As I left farewell messages to countless magical girls.

I felt responses to my words from all over the star turning blue after defeating demons. Numerous colored starlights were responding beyond fate threads.

Finally, I looked up at this star. Though clearly far away, magical girls from all over the star showed their presence through sparkles by holding up glass stars.

With the remnants of the era of destruction - memories of destruction and fragments of three goddesses - in my arms.

I entered the star's wound.

As 10 Galateas followed into the golden will deep in the moon.

One by one

One by one

One by one

They created a white barrier.

And curled up on it, waiting for the day I would leave someday as I fell asleep.

Thus, under the seal blocked by all Galateas.

In the deepest part of the moon.

I faced the will of stars.

"Let's end it, the era of stars."

Chapter 156 : The World of Magical Girls

How long has it been?

Not a short time has passed.

In the flow of stars turning from golden to white starlight.

Because the flow of stars wasn't completely stabilized yet, pus originating from the star's wound occasionally leaked out in transformed forms.

[We can overcome this much.]

I looked at the fragments of the three goddesses in my arms again.

The presence of the three goddesses endlessly seeking salvation in my arms revived very faintly.

The presence emitted by the three goddesses, used as mediums for miracles in a different time by Nyx, had now become so faint it seemed about to disappear.

[...]

[Yes, you want to return, right?]

[...]

[You can't maintain your existence.]

[...]

[Yes, you were beings originating from human hearts.]

They were clearly beings of stars, but born by humans.

Though hating and cursing humans, at first they tried to return to the human world, not the will of stars. Because their beginning, like the goddess of [Beginning], originated from faith.

I bundled the very faint three goddesses into one and spread them into the human world.

The fragments of the three goddesses completely decomposed, losing even their own existence, but.

They realized the reason they wanted to regain power and become free from the flow of stars.

Only after being abandoned by the will of stars did they truly realize the world they wanted to return to. They didn't want to be banished by humans, but just wanted to meet death by humans' side.

They finally completely decomposed even their own existence and seeped into the human world.

Just becoming seeds that create small sparkles.

The goddesses, liberated from curses and hatred, gained salvation only after accepting their own death.

[Haah.]

Feeling the death of the three goddesses, I focused again on what I was about to do.

The size of my soul now completely bloomed as divinity and grown enormous.

Because I was sealing the wound possessed by the will of stars while simultaneously assimilating with the will of stars. The size of my soul had now become difficult to distinguish from the will of stars.

I cut off a very small part from within it.

Memories of one man.

Memories of Shim Hyun-woo.

Because they were memories that formed the basis of my personality, I felt pain and loss incomparable to the size as soon as I cut them off. But because 'his' memories served as a great foundation for my choices and life, I could maintain Shim Hyun-woo's memories.

A soul's worth of one person

That part, originating from another universe, struggled to return to its original world as soon as it was detached. It tried to leave quickly, shouting something. Come to think of it, because the end of the previous life was so futile and absurd, 'he' without the memories of 'Hikari' would be urgent.

'His' soul trying to rise quickly like a firefly.

If it goes like this, he won't be compensated for his already broken time.

"...!!"

[Aaack?! Wait!! Don't go yet!!]

I hurriedly grasped that soul with both hands and stuffed blessings into it.

Though it's something I shouldn't do as a goddess originally, 'he' who served as the foundation of my personality and helped me make such benevolent choices would need this much compensation.

-Eternal Return, may you gain a chance to start again from your tragedy.

-Flow of All Things, may you be able to twist your world a little and embrace girls who experienced tragedy.

-Dream World, may you be able to empathize with her just once the moment you meet some girl.

-Cause and Effect Reversal, may you experience miraculous encounters in your life.

[If you go to another universe, you'll be treated like some mythical hero.]

I put a little more blessing of cause and effect reversal so that 'he' wouldn't go to another universe.

Binding golden memories, memories of girls who lived through destruction, behind his soul.

"...!"

I sent it flying.

Across the boundary of dimensions

Across the far universe

That soul, detached with this star's power and memories, returned to its original universe too easily.

Somehow I felt a little sad seeing that.

'He' had always been with me, fighting and agonizing countless times.

[He really left without hesitation.]

I closed my eyes for a moment and observed what happened after 'he' returned.

I was nervous about unexpected situations occurring because Earth doesn't reach the will of stars, but the blessings activated, reaching more easily than expected.

'He' opened his eyes.

And unexpectedly happy days followed.

Reversal

Happiness

Peace

Encounters

Excitement

[Pft... puhehehe.]

Because I too was once Shim Hyun-woo, I couldn't help but laugh at the boisterous things he experienced. He excellently carried out the tasks I asked and finally moved towards a happy future.

Seeing that, my heart swelled and I laughed loudly.

[Hahahahaha!!]

Shim Hyun-woo finally grasped his own happiness.

Only after seeing that sight could I finally lift one burden from my heart.

It was impossible for 'me' to go directly to Earth, but it was possible to cut out the soul of 'Shim Hyun-woo' existing in me and send it with a goddess's blessings.

Though it was impossible for 'me' to return to mother, 'Shim Hyun-woo' could wonderfully overcome all adversities and meet a happy future.

[Haha... ha.]

Now only I remained in the white space.

I reincarnated the souls of apostles salvaged from the flow of stars into new life forms and gave them new missions, persuaded the three goddesses to return to humanity in new forms, sent back Shim Hyun-woo's soul and saved mother.

Animus

Erebos

[Death]... Thanatos

The three goddesses

Shim Hyun-woo

Have now left my hands.

[Now what I need to do is...]

I now prepared to return to her in the white space.

* * *

April 2023

-As the appearance of Mines is increasing nationwide, Ms. Fujimoto Sumire, director of the Magical Girl Training Institute and head of the Witch Association...

For the girl who had just become a 5th grader in elementary school, news was just boring.

While Dad briefly left the table to get toast, the girl picked up the remote control.

Her taste was for more extreme and intense programs.

"Uuugh, boring, I want to watch something else."

Click

"Eeh?! Noa-chan!! Dad was watching that!!"

"I don't want to, I want to watch 'Witches' Duel'!"

"No. Noa-chan is now in 5th grade elementary school. That's prohibited for under 15."

"But sis sometimes appears there too!!"

"That has nothing to do with the viewing age!"

"Hmph! I hate Dad! Bleeh～"

As always, Noa threw a harmless tantrum at Dad, then clattered upstairs to get her bag. Noa's dad somehow found Noa, who was

much more of a crybaby than when her sister was 10, cute.

"That child became an adult too quickly."

One day, white snow suddenly fell and numerous magical girls were born.

Magical girls with infinite possibilities, but not even having a single star.

It had been 8 years since numerous magical girls receiving colorless stars appeared, and those who experienced the Great War and were active in many places, having their own starlight colors, came to be called 'witches' out of respect.

Noa's sister was also a woman called a witch.

Moreover, as one of the greatest witches counted on one hand among ten thousand witches, she was fighting against Mines that appeared instead of demons and insidiously dug into and tempted human hearts.

"At this age, I'm finally taking care of a real child."

Because Noa's sister went through too many things at a young age and became an adult quickly, he was now seeing a daughter acting her age for the first time.

For the middle-aged man, Mr. Sato, it felt like a kind of gift.

Clatter clatter

With a sound like she would completely smash the stairs, Noa came down wearing her randoseru on her back. She had attached a name tag to her yellow randoseru, but she had attached it so sloppily that it still dangled with the girl's movements.

"Dad! I'm off to school!"

"Okay, have a good day."

On that dangling name tag was written 'Magical Girl Academy Junior

Division 5th Grade', and below it her name was written in crooked letters.

＜Sato Noa＞

Flash!

As soon as Noa left the house, she was sucked into fate threads with a dazzling light.

Sky Garden

The garden that was said to have existed even when witches were girls had long since become entangled and turned into a maze. Noa skillfully ran through those complex paths, searching for the gate leading to school.

"Uhihihi, I should take a slight detour and secretly get food at Shizuku-nee's bakery～"

"Oh? So you were plotting such a thing."

"Eeeek?!"

In Noa's view as she looked back, a reddish-brown cat wearing a cloak and fluttering a paper sword was flying over.

"Me-meow...?!"

"My name is Navi, though my true name is still unknown, that's why I'm training magical girls according to the goddess's orders."

"I didn't ask!!"

"Anyway Noa, why are you going to Shizuku's bakery instead of school?"

Swoosh

The reddish-brown cat thrust its small face in front of Noa's eyes and glared.

Reddish-brown pupils

Split eyes

Flames burning within

Somehow it seemed like countless human figures were flickering to fight within those fiercely burning eyes.

Because of those murderous eyes, Noa was afraid of this mysterious animal assigned as her guide.

"Eek."

"Haah... I can't understand. If you say I'm so scary, why don't you live an exemplary magical girl life?"

"...But Shizuku-nee said she'd make cheese sandwiches today."

"...Cheese sandwiches."

"Yeah. Wa-want to eat together?"

"...Just this once."

"Fuhihi."

The fact that the reddish-brown cat Navi liked cheese sandwiches was a secret only Noa knew.

Thus, after passing through the complexly entangled alleys, the two entering the mysterious magical girl street hear the news that all sandwiches have sold out.

* * *

"Principal. The opening ceremony preparations..."

"Oh my, has it already come to that?"

"Yes... I think you need to come to the auditorium now."

The woman with impressive hair grown to her back slowly left her office.

After the girl once called the greatest magical girl disappeared following the Great War, when asked to name the greatest witch in everyone's minds, they mentioned her, the principal of the Magical Girl Academy.

Halo.

Because now only she could show the 4 stars shining brilliantly behind her back.

Burning white flame

That starlight containing warm love was still waiting for one person.

Chapter 157 : Tomorrow (1)

Sato Noa ended up getting donuts from Shizuku's bakery. With sugar thickly smeared around her mouth, she leisurely walked towards the gate leading to school. Beside her, the reddish-brown cat Navi brushed off sugar stuck to his precious cloak while urging Noa on.

"You're late, Noa. You'll get scolded by the teachers."

"Yeah! I know! Mom and sis said, when you're already late, don't hurry and get hurt, just enjoy taking it slow! They said you can enjoy a leisurely morning that way!"

"My, what excellent home education."

"Yeah! My dream is to become a great magical girl like my sister!"

"..."

Perhaps Navi didn't have the confidence to say anything about the Sato family's educational policy, so he observed the passing scenery with arms folded, following Noa's footsteps.

The scenery of the Sky Garden.

A space that became entangled like a maze over 10 years, affected by numerous magical girls coming and going, and the powerful starlight of numerous witches.

A space only magical girls can pass through.

Even now, as Noa passed through each alley, girls drinking tea in bamboo groves passed by, and girls connecting game consoles to monitors installed in the corridors of an ash-colored castle could be seen.

Various daily lives of numerous girls.

Because it was a space that realized girls' dreams dizzyingly as completely different sceneries passed by quickly, magical girls coming here for the first time easily got lost. Even Noa, when she first received a colorless glass star and came holding her sister's hand, got distracted and lost her way.

"..."

Among the magical girls spending their daily lives in the passing scenery, many magical girls who received Navi's education and successfully bloomed were also visible.

The day colorless stars descended on numerous girls.

On that day when white snow fell, Navi was suddenly born in a corner of the Sky Garden.

[Help magical girls grow properly.]

The mission clearly engraved in Navi's mind was just one.

Since that day, Navi has been with numerous colorless magical girls, pondering together how they can truly grow properly, and watching over them.

"Navi, hello!"

"Hello! Master!"

"Oh? Elementary division? You're in elementary division but already receiving Navi's education?!"

"She must be a completely talented magical girl."

Voices towards Noa passing by with Navi.

Navi waved his front paws moderately, greeting past companions who had already bloomed and were active.

"Everyone is working hard."

Some girls normally found their dreams, some girls bloomed abilities

suitable for combat and fought against Mines or became stars participating in the popular fighting program <Witches' Duel>.

"Master! I'll definitely make it to the semi-finals this time, so please watch!"

"Ah, I'm always watching."

"Kuu! As expected of Master!"

The magical girls who received education from Navi all regarded Navi as both friend and master who seriously pondered and gave advice beside them so they could bloom. A mysterious creature giving different teachings from friends or parents.

A strong cat wrapped in a reddish-brown cloak.

Navi became the most beloved existence among the three guides for magical girls.

"Fufu."

"Wow, kitty is really popular among the guides."

"Only you, Noa, are afraid of me to this extent."

"Uuugh, but! Kitty's eyes are scary."

"Eyes?"

"It's like the things sparkling in kitty's eyes are whispering to me to fight and win against other people."

"..."

Unconditionally fighting and winning against others.

'Hmm, I don't really empathize.'

Hearing those words, Navi pondered for a moment then shrugged. No matter how he thought about it, that was too inefficient. A reckless and simple method likely to gain empathy from those with... broken personalities, whose emotions are cut off.

Only the strong remaining ultimately abandons the bonds and empathy that can be gained from the weak.

The way humans have continued history so far has been building solid trust relationships through compromise and empathy rather than conflict.

Magical girls are the same.

"It doesn't particularly match my thoughts. The world has many more choices than fighting and winning or losing. That's too inefficient... I can't even imagine why you got such an impression from my eyes."

"For example, skipping school and playing hooky?"

Just as Navi was about to reprimand Noa's voice muttering in front of the gate leading to school.

With a refreshing breeze, a cheerful woman's voice was heard from somewhere.

"Oh, Sato kid! Aren't you too bold on the first day of school?"

"Uwah?!"

Whoosh—!

The refreshing green wind suddenly became a massive storm enveloping Noa and Navi.

The novice magical girl without even a starlight color and the small creature had no power to resist that wind.

"Eeeek?! Practice teacher?!"

"Kugh?! [Freedom]! Why me too?!"

"Heh, Sato kid! Start skipping from middle school. I started from elementary school though."

"That's unfair!"

"Adults are unfair originally."

Swish

Within the green storm, a green giant's arm appeared and grabbed Noa who was trying to leave somewhere other than the Academy gate. And the green giant pushed the girl and cat towards the Academy gate.

"Uwaaah?!"

"Kuaaa!!"

Flash!

With a dazzling light, the mysterious creature and girl safely completed going to school.

The woman watching that scene from the highest point of the Sky Garden laughed heartily, her hair fixed with a green hairpin fluttering. Though her hair fluttering over her ample dobok reminded one of an unworldly immortal, she was a woman more worldly and materialistic than anyone.

"Really, putting the school gate in a place like this, the kids' eyes will roll back."

Following homeroom teachers' complaints that too many students were straying to different paths from the first day of school, Ichika, who had the ability to detect the widest range, was keeping watch from the top of the garden. Sure enough, a very familiar face was trying to stray to a different path.

"Geez, the original Sato kid was diligent... I can't even call her kid anymore, so another Sato kid appears and causes trouble."

"Fuhihihi! Aren't innocent kids supposed to endlessly pour out originally?"

"You... why is your way of speaking like that again."

Ichika looked at the black puppy lying on its back and scratching its belly at the highest point of the Sky Garden.

One of the two guides born with Navi.

Boss.

A puppy wearing a hat alternating black and white.

A pitiful appearance with bandages wrapped all over its black body, but its mouth was smiling vilely.

"Fuhihihi! Because I'm the 'Boss'! I'll make lots of innocent magical girls my underlings and someday become a great hat seller!"

"You say that but what you're actually trying to do is be a hat seller."

"Stupid Ichika doesn't understand the philosophy of business."

"What?"

"Originally, to make money you have to satisfy the greed everyone has."

"What does that have to do with hats?"

"Everyone has a 'head'! So to become rich you have to sell hats!"

"..."

Nonsense spewed out like a machine gun in a delicate girlish voice.

It felt like one's mind would go crazy listening to this guy's words.

Ichika ignored those words moderately and carefully observed whether there were any Magical Girl Academy students trying to stray to different paths.

"I never dreamed I'd become a teacher."

"A parachute with a temporary license! A sham teacher!"

"Shut up."

Ichika, who was in charge of force at the center of numerous conflicts over magical girls' powers after the Great War, and achieved an

undefeated champion in <Witches' Duel> after the stability period arrived. The path she chose after numerous battles and paths of freedom she walked was 'teaching someone'.

'Master... you really taught tiny me with such a broad mind.'

How these tiny things cause so much trouble and mischief.

She came to appreciate that her master's method of occasionally throwing peanuts at her head during training was truly gentle.

"Haah."

"Huh? Is the teacher's salary not enough? Is the pay low? Join under me, Ichika!! The doors of <Boss Company> are always open!!"

"...Haah."

The day of practice teacher (temporary) Ichika was hard enough just preventing kids' deviations and taking care of a strange creature enticing magical girls with nonsense.

"I envy Kyoko."

A landmark of Yokohama.

A cafe run by a cheerful female boss.

There, Kyoko became a big shot dominating the area.

Kyoko, who succeeded in promoting SNS tourist courses in conjunction with the local commercial district, was still thriving while managing dozens of employees.

Who would have thought that Kyoko would become the most successful among the girls who escaped from the research facility...

"Haah."

"Why? Why? What's the problem, Ichika? Huh? Huh?"

"Shut up, I'll spoil your true name."

"Uwaaah!! No!! The goddess said I have to realize it myself!!"

The black puppy covered its ears completely with its hat and trembled.

Goddess

Hearing those words, a certain girl came to mind.

The fireworks at Tokyo Bay, hard to forget even after 10 years.

"...Leader."

Ichika was momentarily lost in memories.

A cafe run by an old person, not a young female owner.

There, she put her arm on the shoulder of a silver-haired girl working part-time, listening to the chattering Sato kid beside her while exchanging silly jokes with Kyoko.

Ice cream eaten on the way back to a shabby apartment.

The wind felt sitting on old metal stairs reflecting the sunset.

Talking all night about trivial topics.

"..."

They were trivial but shining days.

Sometimes to the point of wanting to go back to when she was 17.

The summer of 2011 was more impressive to Ichika than numerous battles, than powerful enemies.

But she couldn't stand still.

Because Ichika looked forward to tomorrow more.

Chapter 158 : Tomorrow (2)

A quiet snowy field.

As aurora shines between the dark night sky, a woman wearing a black veil sat motionless in a chair, admiring the aurora. On her shoulder, a crow wearing a dark blue scarf was reporting in a gruff yet affectionate tone.

"She was a girl with a very difficult dream."

"I see."

"But as we pondered together, an answer came out."

"I see."

From the moment three guides were born in this world, for some reason the crow flew towards the far northern sky without looking back. Whenever she wasn't performing her duties, she came and chattered to the woman in a black dress.

The crow 'Tana' didn't know why she did this.

Just that being beside her felt as comfortable as being with family somehow.

She just acted as her heart led her.

"...Thus, I guided another girl onto the path of enlightenment."

"Yes. That's amazing."

"Alisa."

"Yes?"

"Praise me more."

"That's really really amazing."

"Thank you."

"You're welcome."

Yeon-seo just watched the two of them with a wry smile. So as not to disturb Alisa's scenery appreciation, she was preparing a meal with her grandfather in front of a tent set up far away.

A small village in the snowy field where people wounded by death and reality live quietly.

They were spending each day diligently as caretakers there.

"Asya, the stew should be ready soon. Go tell Alisa to come."

"Yes, but what about Tana who can't eat from a plate because of her beak?"

Yeon-seo's grandfather silently picked up and shook a long cup, and Yeon-seo couldn't help laughing as that sight reminded her of some story from an old fairy tale.

The realm of the reaper managing magical girls' deaths and rest was filled with quiet chattering sounds, delicious stew smells, and the faint scent of memories flowing.

Stories of daily life

Tomorrow's plans

Past battles

And

Very occasionally

They would bring up stories of a certain silver-haired girl who had entered Alisa's dreams together in the hospital. When her story came up, the four gathered there would raise their heads and look at the

moon beyond the aurora.

A pure white moon floating in the black sky.

The pure white that only reveals itself at the gateway to tomorrow.

They look at the white starlight and look forward to tomorrow again.

"What will happen tomorrow?"

"Whatever happens, it'll be interesting."

"Yes, I'm looking forward to it."

"I feel the same."

* * *

"Kahahahaha!! I've finally obtained it!! A brainwave controller that can dominate all humans!!"

"Kyaaaah!! It's a Mine!!"

"Run away!!"

"Kahahahaha!! Don't move from your spots, everyone!!"

Guung!!

The madman whose eyes had completely gone crazy with black energy fluttered his lab coat and pressed a button on a massive device. When he activated the box-shaped device attached to his back, the movements of citizens walking around the square stopped.

"...!"

"...!"

The madman dripped black energy from his mouth and smiled the most disgusting smile a human could make. Each time he took a step forward, black liquid dripped with a foul smell, and people hoped he wouldn't come near them while they were unable to move.

"Heheheheh, success!! I've succeeded!! Now I'll make all those who mocked and hurt me into slaves. Fuhihihi!! I, I can have a ro-romance with a pretty college girl too!!"

At the mutterings of the madman who was clearly over 40, the college girls in the square got goosebumps all over their bodies.

Please.

Please don't let that madman come to me.

At that moment when citizens were falling into despair.

A girl's shout was heard.

"That's far enough! You villain!"

"Huh?"

It was a horse mask.

A girl wearing a horse mask suddenly appeared in the square where people were frozen.

"..."

Even in his insane state after becoming a Mine, the madman froze at the girl's strange appearance.

"...A horse mask?"

"In the name of love and admiration, I appear here!! The Magical Girl of [Sculpture] who makes dreams come true!! I, Yamashita Asuka, won't forgive you, villain!!"

"...A magical girl with a title."

Though the madman wasn't scared by the appearance of a girl wearing a Magical Girl Academy junior division uniform, he raised his guard even more at the title she uttered.

Not a colorless magical girl exhibiting unremarkable power, but a true magical girl who could attack with her dream contained.

No matter how young the girl, if she had bloomed a title, she wasn't an opponent to be taken lightly.

Because the 40-year-old madman dreaming of romance with college girls had a goal he absolutely wanted to achieve, he had to defeat her no matter what.

"If you're a magical girl with a title, I won't show any mercy!!"

Drip...

With the madman's shout, all kinds of tentacles emerged from the device on his back. The tentacles split into dozens of branches like sea anemones and were dripping liquid emitting a disgusting scent.

The tips of the tentacles had protrusions wriggling in a shape too embarrassing to even describe, and seeing that sight, the surrounding college girls were retching even while their bodies were frozen.

Wriggle

Wriggle

"...!"

"...!"

A sight revolting just to look at.

It was the madman's obscene inner nature revealed by becoming a Mine.

The horse mask girl didn't budge at all, maintaining a confident transformation pose even seeing the madman's appearance.

'What is this. Co-Could she be a 2-star magical girl?!'

The Witch of [Swift] currently feared even by S-class Mines. It was said that even Sato Hana awakened 2 stars from when she was in elementary school, and finally reached 3 stars during the Great War.

If this strange horse mask girl was also a genius like Sato Hana...

'Th-Then I should run away.'

For a mere C-class Mine like the madman, even a 1-star awakened magical girl was a tough opponent.

"..."

"..."

The Mine and magical girl facing off.

The horse mask girl slowly took off her mask.

"Umm."

Under the mask was a girl with a calm-looking impression, blushing with embarrassment.

"Umm... ac-actually I haven't bloomed a title yet."

"Oh, um... I-I see. Then can't you just go away?"

"B-But."

"Uncle has things to do."

Embarrassment

Awkwardness

The madman completely lowered his guard again and retracted his tentacles.

"Just go home."

"Umm, but I'm a magical girl so I can't just leave..."

"What can a kid who hasn't even bloomed do?"

"Ah, my dad's a policeman."

"Police are public servants too."

"Pu...blic servants?"

"Yes, they can't arbitrarily interfere in areas outside their department."

"B-But my dad's a really high-ranking policeman."

"Then he wouldn't come to the scene."

"Is that so?"

"Yes, goodbye little girl."

-What kind of dog logic is this.

The college girls listening to that conversation from the surroundings desperately signaled the girl not to leave with their eyes, in case the madman's attention might turn from the little girl to them.

But the girl named Yamashita Asuka soon tried to leave the scene with dejected steps.

"Kehihit, now that the nuisance is gone, which beauty will be my lover tonight..."

At that moment

A refreshing woman's voice rang out across the square.

"What lover!"

Swoooosh—!!!

Baaang!!

A beam of light fell from far up in the sky.

Wherever the light passed, gales arose, and the roar produced by breaking through air resistance made ears go numb.

A yellow meteor

A massive flash

The massive yellow meteor that arose from the blue sky passed through the Mine in an instant.

A young woman who appeared with a roar.

Her long side tail danced in the remaining gale, and she leisurely put one hand in her pocket while wearing shorts and sportswear.

With a large stature for a woman, she had a toned body like an athlete, and the yellow flashes emitting from her whole body shone dazzlingly even in broad daylight, revealing her presence.

"Don't say bad things, sleep at the police station!"

The woman wrapped in yellow flashes lifted the Mine's head with one hand without batting an eye, and the helplessly caught madman was bewildered but soon suffered as he was covered in an enormous amount of starlight.

Faaaash!!

A massive starlight that could purify even S-class Mines capable of paralyzing a city in an instant was shining.

"Kuaaack?!"

"Phew."

Snap

As she appeared with a flash and snapped her fingers.

The yellow starlight spreading across the square undid the Mine's evil magic.

"Th-That person is...!!"

"The Witch of Swift!!"

The people freed from restraints recognized that woman's identity and became excited.

"Sa-Sato Hana!!"

"It's Sato Hana!!"

"I'm a fan of Sato-san!!"

Crowds approaching while stepping on the fainted villain.

Hana, who was the most passionate about helping people even among witches, had fan feelings from any ordinary citizen. She always appeared like a meteor wherever people needed help and helped them.

"Thank you all for greeting me. If you request help, I'll always rush over! Like a meteor!"

Because Hana thought the police couldn't arrest the Mine in this state, she waved her hand responding to citizens' excitement while grabbing the Mine's collar and quickly disappeared somewhere again with a flash.

People were disappointed at Hana's appearance disappearing in an instant.

"Ah, I wanted to see more."

"...She's really pretty and tall too."

Men's hearts were pounding at her tremendous speed and dazzling ability, and women were captivated by her gallant height and confident gaze.

"..."

The horse mask magical girl Asuka looked at Hana's back like that, thinking that someday she wanted to become such a shining magical girl too.

Someday, definitely becoming a real Magical Girl of [Sculpture].

She wanted to fight on the same battlefield as the most shining Sato Hana.

"Haah, I should go to mom."

Asuka put that dream in her heart and moved her powerless steps towards the doll workshop her mom runs. As she came out of the subway and walked heavily, she stopped on her way to Ikebukuro where the doll workshop was.

Swish

Swish

A skinny man wearing a mask modeled after a robot face was seen sweeping.

The part-time uncle working at the plastic model shop near the workshop.

When he confirmed Asuka, he lightly waved his hand in greeting.

"H-H-Hello."

The uncle famous in the neighborhood for his robot mask as much as Asuka's horse mask lived nearby.

The uncle who covered his whole body so children visiting the plastic model shop wouldn't be surprised by his scars was one of the landmarks of this neighborhood.

"Huh? Assistant uncle? Hello."

"We-Welcome. Ya-Yamashita-san. To-Today... pla-plastic model again?"

"No. I spent all my allowance last time and got scolded by mom."

"I-I see."

Clatter clatter

The robot mask uncle nodded with sympathetic eyes.

"Th-Then, ta-take this at least."

The robot mask uncle rummaged through his apron with trembling hands from past wounds, and handed over a small armor doll that the

doctor, who was the manager of the plastic model shop, had made as a gift.

"Oh! Thank you!"

"Th-Th-Then ta-take care. I he-hear Mines are appearing a lot these days, be-be careful."

"Yes!"

When Asuka received the doll and peeked inside the plastic model shop, she saw a mixed-race woman in a tank top, a weak-looking delivery girl, and the 'Foctor' wearing clothes saying 'manager' on her skinny body chatting.

Looking closely with narrowed eyes, it seemed 'Ninja' had also come, judging from the strange deep green light flickering on the shop ceiling.

Swish

Swish

The robot mask uncle, uncomfortable with the space full of women, spent time pretending to sweep outside whenever the delivery person and the doctor's friends came.

"Hmm."

Asuka took her eyes off that plastic model shop and walked towards her mom's doll workshop again.

Thanks to the robot uncle's gift, her mood was better than before.

Chapter 159 : Tomorrow (3)

The principal's office of the Magical Girl Academy with warm evening sunlight coming in.

At the Magical Girl Academy built in the open space of Elysion, after the noisy girls' school leaving time ends, quietness comes along with sea breeze tickling the nose.

"..."

Rustle

With a soft sound, another photo is turned over.

So many memories have been created that now even Yuki had to write down what the situation was beside them to remember everything. So that she could explain in detail when 'she' returns.

<Kang Dorim's Mars Colonization Plan Outline Presentation.>

<Hong Nayeon's Inauguration as Battalion Commander of the White Wing Unit.>

<Laura's Reading of the Olympic Opening Ceremony Declaration.>

<Hecate's Victory in the Fighting Game Tournament.>

10 years have passed.

As sudden as the meeting, memories with Hikari who left suddenly were gradually becoming faint among numerous memories. Not forgetting, but just changing into a longing that faintly pressed on the heart.

"..."

The girl became an adult.

Though she couldn't be certain what had changed about herself, everyone around her said she had become an adult.

Adult and child

Future and past

The flow of time defined by human language was just a breeze tickling Yuki's heart while flowing faintly.

Memories.

Like the sea breeze tickling cheeks and the evening glow, moments that feel intensely burning. Before you know it, when you come to your senses, they become a past that flowed faintly, unclear if they even existed.

The warmth of two hands held by the lake that day,

The warmth of two hands held in the small room that day,

The warmth of two hands held on the lunar surface that day.

They have become residual heat remaining in the heart, flowing faintly.

"Haah."

Yuki stopped looking at photos for a moment and moved her pen again.

Not a letter to show someone.

She wrote a letter to show herself.

For when she faces her someday in the far future.

To convey these emotions just as they are now.

[Thus, we who have let even the era of destruction flow to the other side of the past are living in a new era. The era of stars, goddesses,

and miracles has passed, and the era of humans, Mines, and magical girls has come.]

"The era of magical girls."

The dark night sky passed and the dawn of morning brightened, dyeing the sky brilliantly.

Not unreasonable curses of gods and twisted fate of stars, but an era of those living only this moment now.

Yuki carefully scraped off the part saying 'era of magical girls' with a knife.

"Our era is..."

The Golden Age, Age of Death, Age of War, Age of Plague, Age of Greed, Age of Nothingness.

Unlike eras where only endings defined by gods existed, there was no such thing as an ending in the time flowing from now on.

In Yuki's opinion, even magical girls were just afterimages of a passing era.

"...Hope."

Scratch

Scratch

[...The era of hope has come. I am waiting for just one person there.]

[I confess here, I still don't know well how to define that person.]

[My witness, my companion, my love, my friend, my idol, my goddess.]

[Because her existence cannot be defined in one word for me.]

[I'll just call her 'hope' and wait.]

[I wait for hope today too.]

[Shikishima Yuki is still living in the era of hope.]

Thud

Yuki finally closed her memoir and letter which she had written the last sentence of.

Writing whenever she had time over 10 years, it had become a massive record of over 1000 pages before she knew it.

"Should I write a title?"

It's not like I'm planning to show it to anyone anyway.

But if I were to title this book.

Yes.

I'd call it ＜Magical Girl HAZARD＞.

Scratch

Scratch

"Haah."

Yuki put the completely finished memoir on a corner of the desk and tried to close the principal's office door and leave.

"Principal."

"Chairwoman."

"Pfft, sorry, Yuki."

"Sumire, how long do you think I'll be flustered by that title?"

"It seems like Yuki will always have a girl's sensibility."

Sumire often teased by calling her principal even after work hours. After seeing her face turn red the first few times she answered, she kept playing pranks, so now she was completely used to it.

Sumire and Yuki walked side by side down the quiet corridor and suddenly looked towards where they heard signs of people.

Passionate experiments of witches and magical girls coming through open windows.

-Come on! Come on! Let's try one more time!

-No, Witch of [Transfer]!! Can't you please let us go?

-What are you saying!! It's a dimensional gate!! A dimensional gate!! Another dimension!!

-It's the 324th failure now...

-Success is completed with failure originally!

-Even that has limits.

Stop

Another dimension

Hearing those words, Yuki stopped.

It felt like her heart was aching.

"..."

Sumire closed the window pretending not to see Yuki like that.

Because she too felt an ache as some girl's face flashed through her mind.

Because she was lost in memories recalling the miraculous time that came from another world.

Because she felt sorry that person wasn't in today and tomorrow's happiness.

Creak

"..."

"..."

"It's okay."

"Is that so."

"Come to think of it, I heard Hana's younger sister became Navi's education target?"

"Yes, it's the first time that picky Navi said he'd teach an elementary division child. All the teachers are paying attention to Noa-san. Above all, because she's that Sato Hana's younger sister."

"Haha, what would it be like if a colorless magical girl bloomed above 3 stars?"

"Maybe... it would be amazing."

Because she who led us also had a colorless glass star.

Because it was the color of a great magical girl handling infinite starlight.

She will probably run dreaming of an even more amazing future than us.

The ache that had appeared in a corner of Yuki and Sumire's hearts subsided, and they left the Academy's main gate recalling tomorrow's hope, magical girls' education, and memories of the intense 10 years.

Flash!!

A beam of light flashed in the corridor window that Yuki and Sumire had completely left. And an enthusiastic reaction occurred from the magical girls who had been completely deflated from the experiment's failure until just now.

-Oh?! It activated!! It connected to another dimension!!

-What? What changed?!

-One object disappeared to another dimension! Let's find what

disappeared from this open space!

-No, how do we find what's gone rather than what's here?!

In the end, the Magical Girl of [Transfer] conducting the experiment couldn't find what had crossed over to another dimension.

Just one book that existed in the principal's office had disappeared somewhere.

* * *

Yuki, who returned home, changed into the rabbit pajamas she still liked to wear even in her mid-20s, and was reading messages from Academy teachers in charge and messengers sent by students in her room.

"Haah."

It was the moment she moved because her shoulders felt a bit stiff from lying in one position for a long time.

Thud

Clatter

"Huh?"

When she unconsciously picked up and checked the object that rolled, it was the snow globe she had given to 'her' sometime.

Christmas present.

The last gift given to her.

An item Hikari, who stayed on the moon hurriedly after that battle on the moon that day, couldn't take care of.

"..."

Confirming that made her feel faint.

Christmas spent with the silver-haired girl.

Memories in the narrow apartment.

Last memories spent as a middle school student.

'I cried hugging it for the first year.'

Now 10 years later, it was just an object of memories that made her heart faint.

According to Hikari, it was an object symbolizing our fate connected by the goddess of [Beginning], and no more blessings of fate were discovered after this object.

"..."

Yuki quietly put the snow globe in a corner of the bed and fell asleep.

And the last blessing left by the goddess of [Beginning] activated for her who had completely fallen asleep.

Blessing of fate

A miracle allowing the successor and witness to meet

The successor yearns for the witness from the will of stars, the witness yearns for the successor from the surface of the star.

A miracle activated by the goddess's last remnants that hadn't been used anywhere remaining.

Not stars, goddesses, or magical girls.

A miracle created by the will and coincidence of two girls activated.

That night, Yuki could see the person she longed for so much in her dream.

* * *

White space

Dream space

-Hikari?

-Yuki?

The two bewildered girls were just as they had been when they met sometime in the white space.

Not becoming adults as time passed, or becoming goddesses.

The two girls from that time when they discovered each other.

Red coat

Short hair

Black winter clothes

Silver hair

Memories of two 16-year-old girls by the lake.

They met again there.

Hikari approached Yuki with a shy face.

She couldn't distinguish if this was a dream or reality.

-Yuki, have you been... well?

-Yes.

-How was it?

-I was happy.

-I'm glad.

-I regretted that you weren't there.

-Is that so?

-Yes.

The two girls approached each other and held hands.

The two hands grasped were warm.

It came so faintly that tears came out.

Crying, and laughing.

They talked about things that happened over the past 10 years.

Hikari, who stayed on the moon mostly just listened to Yuki's stories.

-So that's why.

-Yes, yes.

For that moment, both girls felt like they had returned to that day 10 years ago.

They talked so much it was impossible to gauge how long.

There were too many stories they couldn't share for 10 years.

-Hikari.

-Yes?

-I miss you.

-Yes, me too.

-When will we be able to see each other?

-I don't know well either.

But

We'll definitely be able to meet.

-Because you said so.

That we'll definitely become happy.

So just like we met walking our own paths in the past and future.

-We'll definitely be able to meet.

-I... see.

Hikari is also trying hard to come.

Yuki was so happy about that.

So she hugged Hikari tightly.

-Let's definitely meet again.

-Yes, we'll definitely be able to meet.

Warm white

Her hair swaying tickles.

It was a very warm dream.

* * *

"Hikari?"

Yuki opened her eyes.

The white space had disappeared somewhere and only the familiar scenery of the old room was visible again.

"..."

Creak

Yuki opened the window and looked at the sky.

The morning sunlight shone dazzlingly, and today that yesterday's me looked forward to came again.

Will 'today' when I meet that girl someday come too, as promised in the dream?

She looked forward to that.

Hope

Shikishima Yuki was living in a time of hope.

"What will happen tomorrow."

"Will I be able to meet you again someday."

"I look forward to it."

I look forward to tomorrow.

Chapter 160 : Epilogue 1 [His Story] (1)

※This epilogue contains harem elements.

-

[Though the era of stars ended, there was no place for the souls of girls who lived through the time of destruction to rest.]

[So the goddess created a place for those girls in the place where the soul from another universe would return.]

[Another connection continued in a slightly different world.]

"...So on March 1st, hundreds of these biker gang members were caught. Geez. The country's in turmoil and these thoughtless kids are just riding around on motorcycles."

"I really can't understand why they do that."

"But our Hyun-woo wouldn't do such things."

A cold spring when cold snaps occasionally hit.

There was a vehicle driving on a narrow road in a provincial city in Gyeonggi Province. Because it was a road not often used by people who weren't locals even normally, Manager Shim Do-yoon who ran a repair shop maintained a somewhat relaxed vigilance even when approaching intersections.

Because it was a road where the view was slightly blocked by illegally parked cars, everyone usually drove slowly. Unless one lost their mind and sped, it was a place where you could just apply the brakes after hearing the sound of cars.

"Our Hyun-woo falls asleep as soon as he gets in a car."

"That's good, he doesn't even get carsick that way."

"That's true."

Shim Do-yoon glanced at the boy sleeping in the back through the rearview mirror after returning from the elementary school entrance ceremony and chuckled.

His son who was attending kindergarten until recently has suddenly become an elementary school student.

"Time really flies, it feels like just yesterday that our Hyun-woo was born crying."

With such cozy family conversation, they were approaching an intersection.

Flash

The boy sleeping in the back, Shim Hyun-woo, opened his eyes. And the boy who had never shouted once until now shouted with all his might.

"Dad, stop the car!!!"

"What?!"

"Stop!!! The car!!!"

"Uwah?! Hyun-woo!! It's dangerous!!"

Hyun-woo's rampage gripping his father's shoulder tightly.

Manager Shim Do-yoon and his wife Gu Seon-young sitting in the front seats had expressions like their souls were about to leave their bodies at their son's sudden rampage. Finally, Manager Shim Do-yoon applied the brakes, wondering if his son was sick somewhere.

Screech

"Hyun-woo! It's dangerous! What are you...!"

Whoosh!!

At that moment, a vehicle making a roaring sound passed in front of Manager Shim Do-yoon's car that had stopped right in front of the intersection. It was the vehicle of Taxi Driver Kim who often visited the repair shop and begged for free engine oil changes.

Vroooom—!!

The taxi that passed through the intersection at a seemingly insane speed narrowly brushed past Manager Shim's car and made a chilling collision sound crashing into a residential wall in the distance.

Boom!

Screech!!

On a peaceful weekday afternoon, people startled by the sudden roar poked their heads out of residential windows, and Manager Shim Do-yoon broke out in a cold sweat at the thought that he could have had an accident with his regular customer.

Screech!

A military vehicle 1 coming from the opposite side of the intersection also stopped in surprise due to the taxi's sudden reckless driving. The 40-something soldier and young driver sitting in the front seat were frozen with wide eyes.

'Was there a soldier at this accident too?'

In Shim Hyun-woo's memory, the accident at this intersection only involved Hyun-woo's family's car and the taxi colliding, and he was seeing the vehicle carrying soldiers for the first time.

"..."

"..."

"Phew."

His heart was pounding hard.

If he had woken up just 10 seconds later.

He might not have been able to prevent the accident.

But he prevented it.

Hyun-woo's new life began by preventing the accident that would have caused his mother's disability.

'I've... returned!!'

On a winter day at age 27.

Thinking that life never flows as one wishes, he closed his eyes in a cold alley that day.

He had regressed 20 years from that day.

Hyun-woo spoke in a low voice to his father looking ahead with a surprised face.

"Dad."

"Y-Yes?"

"I'm glad to see you. I missed you."

"What? Hyun-woo, are you like this because you're shocked from the accident?"

"No, I just said it."

Hyun-woo touched his father's shoulder again, which he couldn't touch anymore after cremation... and looked once at his mother sitting with surprised rabbit eyes. There were few wrinkles on his mother's face, and both her legs were stretched out straight.

Parents much younger than 20-something Hyun-woo's memories.

The atmosphere of the early 2000s where smartphones couldn't be found.

'I've... returned. Really.'

A life he suddenly returned to.

A second chance.

Whether it's a miracle from God, or a delusion dreamed right before death.

Hyun-woo resolved to live a happy life no matter what.

His father running towards the smoking taxi that caused the accident and the 40-something soldier who got out of the military vehicle exchanged glances. Then the two of them barely opened the crumpled car door and pulled out Mr. Kim who was so drunk he couldn't come to his senses.

"Urgh..."

Perhaps because he had fastened his seatbelt with his last remaining reason in the driver's seat, Mr. Kim was just unable to control his body due to drunkenness without a single injury.

Manager Shim Do-yoon and the 40-something soldier hardened their faces seeing that pathetic sight. Both of them were about to shout something, but thinking it would be a waste of energy to yell at a drunk person who couldn't even come to his senses. They just called 119 or took care of the aftermath of the accident.

The scene where an ambulance transported Mr. Kim and a police car approached to investigate the incident.

The two middle-aged men who had worked well together in handling the accident seemed deeply impressed by each other's actions, as they shook hands and laughed heartily.

"I'm Manager Shim Do-yoon who runs a vehicle repair shop in this neighborhood."

"I'm Lieutenant Colonel Park Cheol-yeon who's become the battalion commander at the base nearby."

Manager Shim, a native and well-connected person in this neighborhood, and Lt. Col. Park who had just been promoted to

battalion commander and moved in became drinking buddies through this absurd happening. After finding out that Lt. Col. Park's house he moved into was next door, they even became close enough to call each other "brother".

"What? Really? Your daughter Saebyeok is the same age as our Hyun-woo!"

"Wow, really. It seems Brother and I have some fate. Even our children's ages are the same."

"Hahaha! I was feeling lonely in an unfamiliar neighborhood with no one I knew, but I didn't expect to gain such a good neighbor."

Clink

With clinking glasses, the two men became brothers.

"Let's become in-laws while we're at it!!"

"Let's do it!! Brother!! Let's go all the way!!"

Two weeks after the accident, along with the sworn brotherhood ceremony of two men whose whole bodies had turned completely red from drinking, Hyun-woo gained a childhood friend he didn't have in his memories.

The next day, pushed by his father who was in tatters from a hangover, he went to Lt. Col. Park's house.

"He-Hello."

"..."

A girl wearing a toy helmet sold somewhere, holding a plastic K2 rifle.

Park Saebyeok aimed her toy gun warily at the boy who had suddenly come to play from next door.

"Stop stop stop. Hands up. I'll shoot if you move."

No, this kid is quite FM.

Hyun-woo couldn't help but laugh as military life suddenly came to mind.

"Barley!"

"Rice!"

Her eyes widened as if the guessed password was correct.

Hyun-woo somehow found the pedantic appearance of the girl dressed like a toy soldier cute.

'She really looks like she wants to be teased.'

Remembering the promise his father and Lt. Col. Park had made while drunk, he felt like playing a prank.

"Wh-Who are you?!"

"Your future husband!"

"What...!?"

Saebyeok's face turned red.

Clatter

Clatter

The plastic rifle made sounds as it shook from embarrassment.

Disarmament

The soldier protecting the house in place of the head of household who had passed out from drinking was defeated by an unexpected attack.

Perhaps feeling something ticklish from the bold boy's prank, Saebyeok's mother who was bringing snacks and juice watched the situation unfolding before her eyes with a big smile.

"Wh-Wh-What's your business!!"

"I came to be friends before getting engaged!!"

"Eek?! F-F-For id-identification, move 2 steps to the side!!"

Hyun-woo took 2 steps towards Saebyeok.

Saebyeok moved 3 steps away from Hyun-woo.

Park Saebyeok slowly moving away and Shim Hyun-woo slowly approaching. The two kids soon reached the living room completely, and Saebyeok, cornered, covered her face with her helmet.

"Ah!! Don't come!! By order of the sen-sentry...!"

"Saebyeok."

"Y-Yes?"

Hyun-woo stopped teasing and reached out his hand to the unfamiliar girl in this new reality after he had played a cute prank.

Saebyeok felt something strange as she looked at that hand.

'This kid is weird.'

The strange boy who skillfully played along with the soldier game that no other peers had accepted, leading the situation in an unexpected direction. But because of that boy, Saebyeok's soldier game was completed for the first time.

"I'm Shim Hyun-woo. Nice to meet you. Let's be close friends."

"Okay, Hyun-woo."

For the first time in Saebyeok's life, someone other than her father accepted her soldier game.

The suspicious intruder who invaded her house.

That boy boldly entered not only Park Saebyeok's house.

Thump thump

Though not running in double time, her heart was beating fiercely, invaded by the suspicious intruder.

Saebyeok didn't realize what it was yet.

'This kid is really weird.'

* * *

"Dad, from now on, absolutely don't sell the stocks I tell you about, just keep them tightly in your pocket."

"...O-Okay."

"Just trust me, Dad."

"G-Good heavens."

"Did you get your health checkup?"

"Oh, yes. They said there was nothing wrong."

Manager Shim completely trusted the words of his son who had just entered middle school.

Stocks that went up every time he picked them.

Insight predicting economic issues likened to natural disasters.

A boy prophesying international policies and real estate situations.

'Our son had a talent for investing.'

It was chilling how the young child who ran around the neighborhood holding hands with a girl his age outside came home and spilled economic information like a possessed shaman. Moreover, that information always came true with chilling accuracy.

While other kids his age, including Hyun-woo's childhood friend Saebyeok, opened workbooks and studied. Hyun-woo always opened foreign newspapers and economic newspapers and drew the future

with one red pen.

'I didn't expect it would turn out like this.'

Hyun-woo had attracted media attention by occasionally submitting chilling prophecies to children's newspapers since 1st grade elementary school, and the prodigy boy's predictions of future trends briefly became a topic in Korea. And he aggressively invested using the various advertising fees he received then.

Manager Shim who initially followed his son's red lines was half in doubt.

"Dad doesn't know much about investing."

"Just trust me, Dad."

"Haah, I don't know if this is right."

It was right.

He has now moved from a shabby residential area to an apartment in the central area.

The lands he occasionally invested in with leftover money were increasing in price at a frightening rate, and small buildings in Seoul commercial districts that hadn't received attention were transformed into shopping centers.

Though he already had enough wealth to not have to live running a repair shop in a small provincial city, Manager Shim still wanted to stay as a native interacting with neighbors.

Ding dong

The sound of the doorbell reached the ears of the Shim father and son conspiring with newspapers spread out in the living room.

"Your wife is here."

"Come on, that was just something said when we were young."

"A guy who's just a middle schooler at best..."

Beep beep beep beep

Click!

Seeing Saebyeok enter without hesitation, Hyun-woo shrugged his shoulders as if dumbfounded.

"If you're just going to enter the code, why ring the bell?"

"Well, I thought it was polite to notify the people inside."

"Geez."

"...Is it not okay to come?"

"That's not it."

"..."

Manager Shim lightly patted his indifferent son's back and quietly whispered in his ear.

"You obviously wanted her to open it for you. Treat her well when dating, you'll be held accountable for it later."

"No, Dad, why are you overreacting too?"

"You brat."

Thwack

Manager Shim lightly hit his indifferent son's head and tried to go to the repair shop with the investment information in his arms.

"Take your time."

"Yes, Uncle."

Manager Shim left the house after fondly looking once at Park Saebyeok's energetic appearance, who was already confirmed as a daughter-in-law in his heart.

Hyun-woo just rummaged through newspapers and economic journals without paying attention even as Saebyeok naturally sat down beside him. Saebyeok felt a bit disappointed by that Hyun-woo, but her heart fluttered at his reliable appearance compared to other boys her age who ran around shouting like beasts.

"...Should I peel an apple for you?"

"Huh? Oh okay."

"Alright."

Saebyeok, who brought a plate, apple, and fruit knife as naturally as if it were her own home, was peeling an apple beside Hyun-woo.

Scratch

Scratch

Looking at what Hyun-woo was reading out of the corner of her eye while peeling the apple, it seemed he was looking at foreign news.

Hyun-woo occasionally went abroad with his father to invest.

"Where are you going this time?"

"Yeah."

"Where?"

"England, China, and Japan."

Stop

The sound of peeling apples stopped.

"Until when?"

"About half a year."

"..."

Flutter

Another page of the newspaper turns.

"Hyun-woo."

"Yeah?"

"Why do you keep going out?"

"Huh?"

Hyun-woo raised his head at the strange atmosphere.

Saebyeok had finished peeling all the apples she brought.

Thud!

Why does the sound of the knife being put down strongly feel somehow chilling?

"Uh, well... it's the global era now, and there's nothing more I can do in Korea..."

"Three months."

"Huh?"

"I'll give you three months."

"...Okay."

"Don't be late."

"Yes."

Hyun-woo couldn't resist when this girl he met in the changed time spoke like a soldier.

So a few months later, Hyun-woo and his father packed their travel bags and headed to Incheon Airport.

On a cold winter day, Saebyeok quietly whispered to Hyun-woo heading to the departure lounge.

"Always report unusual situations at least twice, and don't be late for the return time."

"Ah, uh, yes ma'am."

"If you go to another unit by any chance."

"An-Another unit?"

"You will be shot dead."

"...Yes."

Chapter 161 : Epilogue 1 [His Story] (2)

Hyun-woo was traveling around China with his father and a guide, looking into all kinds of investment opportunities and making various contracts, allowing him to meet quite a lot of connections.

'Strangely, since coming back to life, learning foreign languages has become extremely easy.'

Of course, he had studied English intensively for employment during his university days in his previous life, but for Chinese and Japanese, which he had never learned before, it felt like he was absorbing things he had forgotten rather than learning anew.

Thus, Hyun-woo greatly benefited from the foreign languages he acquired during the time he was playing the role of a 'genius investment boy' and saving up a large sum of money. Though it was only for a few months, he newly realized how much being able to communicate between people can overcome great barriers.

'There were many things I wouldn't have known if the language didn't work.'

Because he knew the Chinese cultural market would grow rapidly after the Olympics and had invested in advance in the Chinese cultural market. He became acquainted with people doing entertainment business in China. They were looking for investors to help traditional Chinese musicians perform overseas tours.

-If it's such things, it would be better to request from large companies or experts rather than me...

-The people I brought are not such grand masters, but people who make a living while doing musical activities in small villages. After

all, people without domestic connections find it difficult to get opportunities to obtain investors.

In short, they were looking for overseas investors because they lacked guanxi.

But among picky foreign capitalists, there was no one who would willingly open their pockets for a small group of musicians without official activity records even in their own country, and capitalists who had listened to them made them uncomfortable by making strange requests, they said.

-They seemed to confuse us with a circus troupe, asking us to join their performance group they're investing in, or making dating requests to our daughter...

-Dating requests?

-That... haha.

The entertainment company president seemed uncomfortable explaining in detail to middle school student Hyun-woo, so he circumlocuted with words like giving pocket money or requesting special private performances, but. He could roughly guess what kind of requests were exchanged.

-Since that incident, we've even put out a condition of preferring female investors... but it's not easy to find such a person among those interested in the cultural world.

What they finally chose was to rely on the boy with the title of 'genius investment boy'. With hope that perhaps a boy called a genius, unlike investors so far, might see their true selves.

The meeting arranged like that.

While talking with the responsible band representative, Hyun-woo increasingly felt like investing.

Love for family.

Responsibility towards those who believe in them.

Desire to heal people with music.

Because the craftsmanship he possessed somehow reminded him of his father, and because the great cause of wanting to heal people's hearts with music touched on the advice his father had given Hyun-woo in his past life.

-Become a person who walks a great path, Hyun-woo.

"..."

Hyun-woo still held his father's words from the vanished time in his heart.

With the belief that perhaps that great path could lead Hyun-woo to greater happiness.

Hyun-woo shook hands with the band representative.

"I want to be with people who want to walk a great path."

"Th-Thank you!"

Perhaps feeling great affinity for the young investor who respected their craftsmanship. The band representative finally arranged a meeting with his daughter, whom he considered his successor.

Hyun-woo met a girl named Li Meilin who had become a musician at the youngest age in the band.

Long black hair, white face, well-balanced body.

He was certain that if this girl went into the international film industry, she would always be cast in fixed roles as an Oriental beauty.

"Nice to meet you."

"N-Nice to meet you."

Hyun-woo was overwhelmed by Li Meilin who exuded an unapproachable atmosphere like a model on TV, even though she was

the same age as him. Because he had memories up to his late 20s, he received a stronger impression of cuteness from girls similar to his current age, but...

'This one really is on a different level alone.'

Li Meilin showed a glimpse of allure that even blew away the cute impression unique to girls.

His face burns hot every time he makes eye contact with her.

As if that wasn't enough, his heart that beat uncontrollably every time he saw Saebyeok in casual clothes these days caused trouble here too. It felt like just yesterday that Saebyeok was walking around in military-like outfits asking to play army games, but as she gradually grew her hair and suddenly came in wearing so-called girlfriend looks, he naturally glanced at her.

'Saebyeok has suddenly become interested in fashion these days...'

All kinds of stray thoughts come as his mind shakes as much as his heart beats indecently.

Hyun-woo pinched his leg to try to pull his mind back from going off on a tangent.

'Get a grip, Hyun-woo... she's almost young enough to be your niece. She's a person who came for investment consultation.'

No, they're the same age now.

Anyway.

What's not allowed is not allowed.

But that was only for a moment.

Hyun-woo was surprised again by what Li Meilin showed.

Five-point prostration

She was kneeling on the floor and rubbing her palms together.

"Hiiiii... ple-please invest!! My father has been looking for a safe investor because of me...!! I can't cause any more trouble!!"

"Ra-Raise your head please!! I've already decided to invest!!"

"Oh, really?"

Hehe

Li Meilin sucked in her tears and sat down scratching her head while sipping tea.

"You-You're very skilled at controlling your emotions."

"Kuhuhu, it's one of the ways to survive with this beautiful face."

Li Meilin winked one eye while pretending to poke the air with both fingers.

The frivolous gesture seemed to shout 'What's wrong? You know.'

"..."

Her face was beautiful, but somehow it felt like he'd lose if he acknowledged it.

"...I see."

"Tch, you're no fun."

After a brief awkward time passed.

Li Meilin and Hyun-woo briefly talked about things like the reason for accepting investment in the band and future plans.

"By the way, I imagined an old man when they said an investor from abroad... you know how to respect others. And your boldness to travel abroad too..."

"Is that so?"

"Hmm, you said you're the same age as me?"

"Ye-Yes."

"Hmm, hmm."

Li Meilin kept making nasal sounds as she looked Hyun-woo up and down from top to bottom, then nodded her head.

Because he had come for overseas business, Hyun-woo was neatly dressed in a custom-tailored suit that cost quite a lot of money. Though it was a suit for formality rather than a design to flaunt wealth to others, an undeniable luxury could be felt.

His cleanly maintained hair and nails showed a glimpse of his usual clean and regular living habits. And yet he also had the tolerance to not force formality or standards on others.

He didn't have the immaturity of shouting at the top of his lungs and revealing an inflated ego like prodigies in adolescence usually do.

Calm

Neat

Luxurious

Moreover, his age was the same as Li Meilin's.

"Hmmmm."

Poke

Li Meilin lightly pressed Hyun-woo's necktie with her slender finger.

Flinch

Hyun-woo was surprised by her suddenly pressing the necktie Saebyeok had chosen.

"A woman chose this for you, right?"

"Huh? Oh, yes. How did you know?"

"Usually men prefer solid colors in formal settings, but choosing a

bold pattern over such a modest suit design, and choosing a color considering personality and skin tone..."

It seemed like a different choice from Hyun-woo's calm and somewhat indifferent personality.

'If this man had chosen himself, he would have hidden it inconspicuously in achromatic colors.'

The unexpectedness felt from the bold color of the necktie seemed to show a pure humanity Li Meilin couldn't see under the suit.

Someone who knows this man's identity.

Who has known this person for a long time.

Who decides this person's personal color.

Li Meilin felt like some woman was glaring while shouting like that.

The fact that someone was already eyeing him was the surest guarantee above all.

"Interesting. Girlfriend?"

"Huh? No. Childhood friend."

"Hmm, hmm, hmm."

Li Meilin, who had been nodding her head repeatedly like that, looked at Hyun-woo once more with an expression full of interest, and finally left a word in Hyun-woo's ear before finishing the meeting.

"Make sure to see me again when we perform. You can bring that person too."

"..."

"I'll definitely do our first performance in Korea."

"I-Is that so."

"Of course, we could do it earlier if you 'personally' call me!"

"Ah... that's a bit..."

"Huhu, then."

Let's definitely meet again.

Us.

Clatter

For some reason I really don't know why.

Hyun-woo felt like he heard the sound of a single shell casing falling.

Why did the image of a target rising at a 100-meter shooting range come to mind?

Why?

Click

The sound of the adjustment lever changing from single shot to automatic fire was also heard.

Hyun-woo headed to England with an unknown chill in his heart.

Chapter 162 : Epilogue 1 [His Story] (3)

Shim Hyun-woo was standing with his mother Gu Seon-young in front of a newly built shopping complex in the neighborhood.

Inside the complex, various facilities including a convenience store and a billiard hall were already occupied, and on the most prominent spot on the first floor was a neatly arranged fruit store.

Inside, it was bustling with girls' voices.

A girl with impressive long black hair and black dobok was lifting and moving heavy furniture with one hand. Next to her, a grumpy-looking blonde girl was grumbling, and a brown-haired girl wearing glasses was giving them various instructions.

A girl with long hair swept back and a girl wearing a kimono were just watching from a corner of the store.

"Haiyun, put that a bit further inside! Damn, not everyone has as much strength as you."

"Got it."

"Emily, why aren't you doing anything?"

"Haha, Fatima. Smart people are supposed to oversee everything from behind."

"Ah~ Somehow..."

"Pfft, stupid Fatima. I wonder how long you'll keep being played by Emily."

"Why are you sneering when you can't move at Emily's words either,

Anna?"

"..."

Amina was grinning while looking at Anna's crumpled expression.

Conversations exchanged in English with accents from various countries.

Emily

Lee Haiyun

Fatima

Amina

Anna

Inside the fruit store where construction was completely finished, 5 girls were busily moving around and moving things. Originally it wasn't even their job to do, and at first Seon-young stopped them in shock, but they didn't listen.

"Is this your building too?"

"Yes, but I'm planning to transfer it soon."

"My goodness, are buildings overflowing from your pockets so you can't handle them?"

"I just owned it, so I should hand it over to someone who can manage it well."

"You can't handle the girls overflowing either, what are you going to do about that?"

"..."

"Mom doesn't even know who's a daughter-in-law past five... Saebyeok and Hyun-woo, sort it out yourselves."

"...Yes."

Seon-young looked at the fruit store once more and marveled again.

Though products haven't come in yet, the fruit store with sophisticated-looking display cases would look even better when all kinds of fruits come in.

"It's a bit of a shame. Mom used to dream of opening a fruit store too."

"I'll make that dream come true."

"Huh?"

Hyun-woo pointed at the fruit store with a playful gesture and said.

"Please take good care of guarding the building, Boss."

"...Pfft."

Seeing Hyun-woo's playful eyes, Seon-young seemed to roughly guess the situation, at first showing a touched expression but gradually changing to a cold gaze. Because she had already been surprised enough by his genius since elementary school, she knew her son was up to something again.

Still, it didn't seem right to exploit the girls.

Not knowing which one among them might become a daughter-in-law.

"Are you exploiting girls to show filial piety?"

"No, Mother. We said we wanted to do this ourselves."

Pat pat

Light footsteps.

Emily, who had been giving various instructions to the 4 girls in the store, pushed up her glasses and spoke proudly.

Fluent Korean.

Emily, who was born and raised in England from birth, mastered Korean in just a month and often talked with Hyun-woo's family. Emily, who felt drawn from Hyun-woo's first visit to England and followed him to Korea with just one suitcase, had now volunteered as an advisor to the Shim household.

'Perhaps Hyun-woo could show me a world I haven't seen.'

Emily was pinning her hopes on a boy who might be able to show her human hearts that exist between victory and defeat... especially love.

"Because Hyun-woo said he would make my heart beat."

With both hands on her chest, Emily made an expression recalling precious memories.

The face of the boy who seriously spoke words no one else had in front of the subway station with the evening glow shining. That was Emily's first tremor, and the first noise in a life that always moved regularly like a clock.

The machine breaks and the heart comes alive.

The girl is fascinated by that noise, always looking into the clock of life and waiting for the next noise.

The face of a girl anyone could see had fallen in love.

Seeing that face, Seon-young calmly asked her son.

"Hyun-woo, didn't Saebyeok's face flash in your mind when you said that?"

"..."

Hyun-woo was speechless.

Strangely, every time he went abroad, he encountered girls with worries as if a magnet was placed on a needle case. And Hyun-woo always fatefully came up with ways to solve their worries each time.

'My first meeting with Saebyeok actually started with that feeling

too.'

Saebyeok who needed a friend to empathize with her different sensibility from other children.

Meilin who needed someone to protect her beliefs from the world's storms.

Haiyun who wanted to see the world from a corner of an old dojo.

Fatima who was abused by a soldier named Alex in a refugee camp.

Amina who was discriminated against for being an orphan in a wandering puppet troupe.

Anna who needed a place to live with her family abroad.

And Emily who sincerely wants to understand human emotions.

Girls always appeared reaching out for help on the path Hyun-woo was advancing, and Hyun-woo always had solutions to help them. The girls who gathered around Hyun-woo like that had been living together in an apartment Hyun-woo owned and helping with Hyun-woo's work for a year already.

-Six is too much!!! You bad guy!!!

-Sa-Saebyeok, I can explain everything... Uwah?!

Ping

Ping

Ping

Ping

On the first day Hyun-woo brought them, he was shot by Saebyeok with a toy gun.

When exactly six magazines were emptied, Saebyeok faced Emily, the strongest among the uninvited guests, with cold eyes. Somehow there seemed to be a red energy swirling in the brown eyes shining beyond

her glasses.

Emily also thought she saw pink waves of strong yet intense emotions in Saebyeok's eyes.

Reddish-brown and pink

The two girls looked at the light felt in each other's eyes and spoke in low voices.

-You came from far away.

-Yes, I came from far away. Following Hyun-woo.

-It'll be hard when you go back.

-Huh? Why? It's really comfortable going with Hyun-woo.

Ah right

Emily smiled and clapped her hands.

-You said Saebyeok hasn't traveled alone with Hyun-woo, right?

-Hmm.

-Huhu.

Saebyeok's eyes burning fiercely and intensely.

Emily's eyes shining calmly and faintly.

-Hiing... Why did you shoot me...

At the moment the two gazes clashed, Meilin had already been defeated by Saebyeok and was trembling in a corner of the living room. Fatima stood blankly with a confused face unable to read the atmosphere, and Amina and Anna judged who was more dominant between those two.

Li Haiyun went straight into Hyun-woo's room and was caught sleeping beside him.

Poke

Hyun-woo's thoughts disappeared far away due to the finger on the bridge of his nose.

"Hyun-woo, you're thinking about me, right?"

"Huh? Oh yeah."

"Hehe, Hyun-woo rolling your eyes like that while pondering... you were thinking about when Saebyeok and I talked, right?"

"...Yeah."

"That's strange... shouldn't you take Saebyeok's side since you've known her longer? Time spent together is an overwhelmingly advantageous basis in winning these emotional battles."

"Get rid of that bad habit of dividing people's hearts so sharply."

"Huhu."

Emily had expected that answer, but she was still happy to actually hear it from Hyun-woo's mouth.

She still hadn't gained victory over Saebyeok yet.

But every time his gaze fell on her once, his voice reached her once, she didn't care about such victory or defeat anymore.

'Why? This irrational and unreasonable emotional change is like...'

There was a black silhouette appearing behind Emily like that and instantly occupying Hyun-woo's side.

"Hyun-woo!"

Black gale

She made Hyun-woo embrace her instantly through mysterious movements from her slender body hidden in the dobok. That appearance looked like a python completely wrapping around a pine tree.

"Haiyun?!"

"Yes, Hyun-woo."

Creep creep

Answering the surprised voice while tightening her soft body.

Waist pressed close

Legs sticking stickily

Though the strength extending from her hands was so powerful, there was no part that wasn't soft among the touching parts.

Hyun-woo was startled by the sudden feeling on his body and the girl's fresh scent entering his nose.

"Wa-Wait, let's talk after letting go of this!"

"Hyun-woo, I did everything Emily told me to."

"Huh?! Oh... good job Haiyun."

"Hyun-woo."

"Yes?"

"Hyun-woo."

"What?"

"I'm going."

Smooch

Hyun-woo, who was completely tied up before he knew it, was even more flustered seeing Haiyun approaching with her lips pursed. He couldn't understand why this sudden action was happening right now.

"Why all of a sudden!?"

"Hyun-woo..."

"Oh my, I can't watch anymore because it's embarrassing."

Seon-young waved her hand at that sight and quickly walked towards home, and Emily stuck close to Seon-young's side and spoke in a gentle tone saying 'Mother'.

At first, Seon-young didn't show a good reaction to Emily who threatened Saebyeok's position, but she was gradually opening her heart to Emily's friendly and decisive actions.

Hyun-woo sent a gesture for help towards the two disappearing people.

But the two just chatted while moving away.

Haiyun's moist lips slowly approached.

Hyun-woo had a feeling that if he met those lips directly here, something big would happen.

There would be a big change in the Saebyeok and Emily front that had barely become fixed.

Because Hyun-woo had a lot to do in the future, he wanted to avoid such a disaster.

"Urghh!! Haiyun!! Let's talk rationally!!"

"Okay, let's have a 'rational' body conversation."

"No!!"

"That's enough."

Swish

Anna's kimono sleeve blocked Haiyun's lips, and Fatima and Amina untied Haiyun's limbs to free Hyun-woo. Haiyun struggled with her lips rounded even amidst Fatima and Amina's restraint.

"Ah ung. Hyun-woo!"

"..."

Suddenly freed, Hyun-woo leaned his body slightly forward and patted his back, and Amina saw that and grinned while pretending not to see.

Hyun-woo felt Amina's consideration and patted his back faster as if more embarrassed.

Pat pat pat...

Amina let out a hehe laugh and casually threw out a topic to change the awkward atmosphere.

"Hyun-woo, you said you have something you're going to do from now on, right?"

"Oh yeah, that's right. I wanted to explain it to you guys too."

As Anna and Fatima who were standing with somewhat bored faces paid attention, and even Haiyun who was causing a commotion calmed down. Hyun-woo showed the girls a paper with an outline of the business he was planning written on it.

"Dream... Star Company?"

"Yeah, that's right."

"What is it?"

Hyun-woo had accumulated quite a lot of wealth while acting as a 'genius boy' until now. And those methods would increase further in the future, and the remaining methods were easy ones for him who knew future knowledge.

He suppressed his father's illness early,

Avoided his mother's accident and opened a store for her.

All the businesses he touched prospered, and he always encountered good connections and good people.

It could be said he had already achieved almost all the happiness attainable in 'Shim Hyun-woo's' life.

'But is that everything?'

There was too much time and strength left to end with just being satisfied living well alone.

Hyun-woo looked at the girls gathered around him.

Girls who were in situations they couldn't overcome on their own, with extremely narrowed vision trying to confine themselves in darkness.

"...Want a kiss?"

"Focus when we're having a serious conversation, Haiyun."

"I'm hungry."

"...Why are you like that again?"

Haiyun, Amina, Fatima, Anna.

Hyun-woo realized something while helping these girls who gave greater meaning than what he had been doing. The thought that sometimes warm hands extended to someone could become great salvation and move this world.

Great path

Hyun-woo now wanted to become a person who walks a great path that can help someone.

"I'm going to do a business that helps people."

"How will you do it? Are you thinking of creating a foundation?"

Anna, who decided to leave Japan due to the tyranny of her uncle running a large company, muttered with a cold smile. She still sent cynicism towards most people except Hyun-woo and his family, and colleagues who went around with him.

"Hyun-woo, you don't need to show goodwill to everyone. Not everyone returns goodwill with goodwill."

"Nevertheless."

"..."

"Nevertheless, if we don't give up and don't break."

Hyun-woo declared in front of the girls with both fists clenched.

"If I become a person firm enough to show hope to people. Will you follow me?"

"Haah."

Anna turned around completely and put her hands completely inside her kimono sleeves.

But her ears had turned red.

"Do whatever you want."

"Thank you, Anna."

"So what exactly are you doing?"

"I'm thinking of making an application."

"An application?"

While showing a winning smile to Anna who glanced back, Hyun-woo shook his smartphone.

An application with a transparent star drawn on it was already installed on his smartphone. Various notifications were popping up on that application linked with the SNS messenger app Hyun-woo had invested in advance.

"A channel where you can post and reveal your dreams."

"A place to open up about how you want to live."

"The first step to realizing dreams."

Chapter 163 : Epilogue 1 [His Story] (4)

＜Post your dream through the glass star!＞

A dark room

In a place where only the light of a smartphone shone like a small lamp, there was a girl covered in a blanket.

The old room made into a complete darkroom with even the curtains drawn was a world only for her.

A world only for her where no one could hurt her.

"..."

An app showing a sparkling glass star and message input box that had been flashing since earlier.

＜Star of Wishes＞

It was a 'write a wish' function newly released by a messenger app company that quickly occupied the market to match the smartphone era.

A function to show and share one's dreams.

Normally, she would have thought it was a meaningless event-like function. But as it was the first event of a foreign conglomerate that quickly occupied the messenger market in connection with various character businesses. People participated with quite high expectations along with skeptical thoughts.

"...Wish."

The girl thought it might be some kind of marketing broadcast draw planned by the company.

Wishes coming up all over the screen even now.

There were people who wrote phrases close to crime warnings or sexual harassment. But most wrote down their own modest and realistic contents.

-I want to eat premium melons.

-If only I could grow 3cm taller.

-I hope I get accepted to the university I want.

-I wish the girl I like would understand my feelings.

-I hope the weather is clear for tomorrow's track meet.

-A girlfriend.

The contents of wishes written by people using the app nearby. They were slowly rising behind the glass star.

The screen where numerous wishes written in clean and sophisticated fonts passed by faintly was quite dreamy in itself.

"..."

A space where countless people write down their honest dreams.

Perhaps swept up in the atmosphere of seeing countless wishes pass by like white snow. The girl slowly wrote down the wish she had in one corner of her heart.

Actually, she had a different real wish, but it was too unrealistic.

[I want to go backpacking abroad.]

The girl laughed wryly at her insignificant wish when she saw what she had written. But she became discouraged again at her timidity that couldn't even boldly reveal this insignificant wish.

"I don't like standing in front of people..."

A burn scar from childhood

Fortunately, before the fire completely swallowed the girl, her father pushed her back so it ended with just a burn scar around her right eye. But because of this scar that occurred due to curiosity in front of a pottery kiln, Yuki still strongly disliked standing in front of people.

Because of that unconfident attitude, Yuki was still alone even now after entering high school.

"...I hope no one knows who wrote this."

Yuki threw her smartphone next to her pillow, closed her eyes again, and sent her consciousness far away into the darkness.

That night.

Somehow, it seemed like she dreamed of a white shining star passing by before her eyes.

* * *

"Yeah, Saebyeok. Okay, I'll do well without getting hurt. What? Concubine? No, not that... Yeah. Oh, Anna said that? Uh... me too. Yeah, thanks."

Hyun-woo returned to the office after finishing his call with Saebyeok.

Emily roughly guessed everything that was said from Hyun-woo's face.

"Saebyeok?"

"Yeah. Seems she called because she was worried."

"Well, her husband is working all the way in Japan."

"..."

Hyun-woo could no longer refute Emily's words.

'I don't know how it ended up like this.'

Six girls gathered starting with Meilin.

It had already been 2 years since he worked and lived close to them.

By this point, even the insensitive Hyun-woo could tell that the feelings Saebyeok, Emily, Meilin, Haiyun, Anna, Amina, and Fatima had for him were not just a joke or light-hearted. He could also tell that because those feelings were so big and desperate, they were watching each other's reactions to avoid boldly stepping forward.

'Once the work stabilizes, I should have a serious talk with everyone.'

If he didn't clearly determine his feelings for the girls he had formed connections with, he would end up hurting all of them.

Even Saebyeok, who was in the middle of dealing with Emily and sorting things out, and Hyun-woo's parents seemed to have given up on the expectation that Hyun-woo would choose only one from the start.

-It's not like you're a Joseon era nobleman, really trying to have three wives and four concubines...

Stung by his father's words uttered one day seeing Hyun-woo fooling around with the girls, Hyun-woo went around giving gifts and greetings to all their families while squeezing out time from his busy schedule. Thanks to Hyun-woo's efforts like that, the girls' families also seemed to have inclined towards hoping things would work out well in their hearts.

-Well... if everyone agrees, it would be good to live harmoniously.

-Right?

-It's a bit much to blush and fight at this point.

-As long as the husband provides for everyone...

Meilin, who had been completely caught by Saebyeok, was now serving Saebyeok as her older sister and volunteering as the number

two mistress of this household. Amina and Fatima, who had no family, were subtly supporting Emily, who had become the household's advisor due to her own abilities.

-Well, I expected it would be like this from the start.

Anna, who came with her family and was quite confident in her own abilities, had expressed the position that she would be satisfied as long as she was given sincere affection occasionally, as if she had expected this situation from the beginning.

-Saebyeok has it tough.

Anna respected Saebyeok's position, as if she saw someone's image in Saebyeok's figure struggling for the family's order despite being of ordinary status.

-Mmmm... I just want to fool around with Hyun-woo even if I don't get married... Want to?

Haiyun troubled Hyun-woo by showing tastes that couldn't be predicted at all. That's why Haiyun was always the top target of vigilance and check for Saebyeok and Emily.

Saebyeok and Emily.

The two girls backed by the support of girls who took one step back

Now that everyone in the Shim family had given up on the expectation of choosing only one, the most important topic was the question of who would take the position of first daughter-in-law.

Anna and Meilin following Saebyeok of legitimacy.

Amina and Fatima following Emily of ability.

Hyun-woo could only break out in a cold sweat seeing such a power structure completed.

He glanced at the smartphone that kept ringing incessantly even now.

'If this is discovered too, I might get beaten by the two who formed

an alliance...'

Because besides the girls he had already formed unbreakable connections with, his smartphone was buzzing with contacts from other girls he had somehow formed big and small connections with while traveling around the world.

"Haah... things have gotten big."

"Huhu, women? Work? Both are within the expected range though."

An office in Japan.

Hyun-woo and Emily were rummaging through all kinds of documents in the office that was busily operating until late. Both of them had been staying and eating at the Dream Star Company office in Japan for several days.

Incessantly pouring inquiry calls.

Endlessly pouring faxes and emails.

The IT company Hyun-woo had steadily nurtured in preparation for the smartphone era began to quickly dominate the Asian market along with a new smartphone release from an American company. It established itself in a near-monopoly form while deploying a content-oriented strategy incorporating character industries, stamps, web novels, and webtoons.

An SNS conglomerate growing itself even if left alone.

But Hyun-woo had a business he pushed forward even to the point of establishing a dedicated subsidiary.

-Let's show the appearance of fulfilling people's dreams.

Dream

It was a fleeting resonance for modern people and a word that had disappeared into childhood memories.

Hyun-woo wanted to pull out that faded word and give hope to

everyone.

Hear everyone's dreams, help everyone fulfill their dreams.

Approach people who have experienced impossible things and help them stand up.

Help them find small and precious happiness.

-What?! You're really registering me for a bakery academy?!

-What?! You're really going to help me fulfill it?!

Rumors of people who fulfilled their dreams growing one by one.

The glass star of wishes that started like that explosively gained popularity along with rumors that wishes really came true. Of course, there were not a few people who said it was a false wish when they went to check, or who criticized Hyun-woo's actions.

Image management charity business of a conglomerate.

Money waste of a young and thoughtless nouveau riche.

Criticism that he was making content with the appearance of ordinary people living in developed countries while turning a blind eye to the truly unfortunate in Africa decreased in front of the huge food shortage research subsidy and donation list Hyun-woo had extended, but. Hyun-woo's actions still received much criticism.

-Still, is it common for someone whose name has made it onto the world's rich list to try so hard to help others like this?

Eccentric investor

Passionate hypocrite

Those were the titles Hyun-woo had gained while running Dream Star Company for the past year. Nevertheless, Hyun-woo wanted to convey hope to people using his wealth.

He endlessly poured the fruits of his efforts into a bottomless barrel.

He didn't break even in the face of unwarranted malice returned for goodwill extended with noble intentions.

Sometimes requesting help from people around him.

Sometimes predicting unpredictable futures.

Sometimes coming up with ideas no one else thought of.

He rapidly expanded his domain and bestowed it with goodwill for no reason.

Emily couldn't think of the word 'defeat' from such a foolish and inefficient appearance.

Because she had fallen for that stubborn appearance, and people drawn to his goodwill were gathering.

"Really, there's no waste like this."

"...Sorry."

"Huhu, then will you marry me? Me first."

"Sorry, I must finish talking with everyone first..."

"Yes, yes, I know."

Huhu~

Emily smiled at Hyun-woo and began sorting documents again.

Seeing that, Hyun-woo also finished sorting and checked the wish list that had come up to him.

'Hm?'

[I want to go backpacking abroad.]

Why?

When he saw that wish, the title of some forgotten book came to Hyun-woo's mind along with a white light.

A book that no longer exists in this world.

He thought of the face of some girl on the cover of that book.

Eyes

Riverside

Met in light

Red ribbon

Short hair

Scent of acacia...

Hyun-woo recalled a word he had completely forgotten in the changed world.

"Magical girl..."

"Hm? What did you say?"

"Huh?"

Hyun-woo stupidly asked back while looking at Emily's face.

"What did I say?"

"It was too quiet to hear... no, you said Emily I love you let's get married. Let's have about 12 kids, you said."

"...That's a bit."

"I'm joking. Let's have just two."

"..."

Hyun-woo shook his head at those words while stamping 'Approved' on the paper with the wish that bothered him.

* * *

Tremble tremble

Yuki was standing nervously in front of Dream Star Company.

'I never thought my wish would be chosen...'

Because it was such an insignificant wish, when she received a message that the wish she had written and forgotten herself would be fulfilled. Some unknown attraction resonated in Yuki's heart.

Yuki came to a place more than an hour away from home for the first time in 7 years since getting her burn scar, holding her smartphone and breathing heavily. Her father shed tears seeing such a Yuki advancing towards the outside for whatever reason.

"..."

People glanced at the girl standing blankly by the roadside with her face covered by a hat and mask in broad daylight, and bandages covering one side of her face underneath.

"..."

Afraid

Scared

Unfamiliar

Embarrassed

She wants to run away to the subway and go home even now.

She broke out in a cold sweat feeling like everyone was staring at her.

'Should I... go back.'

At the moment she was about to turn her steps.

A boy in a suit approached behind Yuki.

"Oh? Did you come because of a wish?"

"...Yes?!"

"Ah, are you not?"

"Th-That's, um..."

Hesitating

Fidgeting

Yuki couldn't answer for a while, pondering over a question that could be resolved just by nodding her head. Hyun-woo felt a part of his heart ache seeing Yuki's appearance.

'She has... a wound.'

To Hyun-woo's eyes, Yuki's face with one side covered in bandages came painfully.

He seemed to know why she showed an unconfident attitude.

Mother from previous life.

Mother limped on one leg.

Even mother, who lived proudly as a pillar of the neighborhood along with Manager Shim, was secretly burdened by the gazes that somehow seeped out of people's eyes. She gradually shrank and became smaller even in the neighborhood she had lived in for decades.

"..."

"Th-That's, I'm sorry."

Hyun-woo could find that appearance, which couldn't be seen in this world's mother but clearly remained as a wound in one part of Hyun-woo's heart, in Yuki's appearance.

"Let's go together."

"Yes?"

Hyun-woo extended one hand to Yuki.

"Even if it's not a wish, since you came all the way here, I hope you can find what you want."

"What I... want?"

"Yes, I'm an eccentric who wastes money trying to fulfill other people's wishes."

"...Wish."

Yuki took that hand.

A rough and stubborn but warm hand.

That hand led the girl.

"Did you perhaps just visit?"

"No. Wi-Wish, it's right."

"Then..."

"Backpa... ba-backpacking..."

Ah

So it was this girl.

Hyun-woo looked at the girl trembling with nervousness. If this unconfident girl had chosen such a wish to face the outside, he wanted to gladly fulfill it.

Meeting like this must be fate too.

"I see. That's good. Where do you want to go?"

"Th-That's..."

"Yes?"

"..."

Would it be too selfish to say I want to change my wish in this situation?

Yuki couldn't say anything more because of such thoughts.

"..."

"..."

Silence

Quiet office

After the sudden silence passed, Hyun-woo continued speaking.

"By the way, there are many people who changed to their real wish here too."

"Real... wish?"

"Yes, I'm just doing this because I want to see people being happy... Thanks to that, I get a lot of rumors that I'm trying to start a pseudo-religion, or slander that I have strange ideologies, but."

Hyun-woo shrugged his shoulders with a bitter smile.

"..."

Yuki thought the light shining through the window behind where Hyun-woo was standing suited him very well.

Perhaps enchanted by that light.

She suddenly spoke her real wish in a low voice.

"...I want to love myself more."

"I want to live among people."

"I don't want to live running away anymore."

"Please help me."

Hyun-woo nodded with a serious face at Yuki's appearance.

Burn scar.

Trauma.

It wouldn't be asking to solve such things in one breath.

Life's ups and downs.

Indelible wounds.

Perhaps it was a deep wound like the image of mother remaining in one corner of Hyun-woo's heart. That wound often revived in Hyun-woo's heart and caused pain even while seeing the appearance of his parents enjoying vacation surrounded by luxury goods in a hotel suite room.

Hyun-woo had long concluded that time was the only way to solve that pain.

Time it takes to reclaim one's life and accept oneself.

Instead of mentioning things like plastic surgery or money, Hyun-woo wrote down a contact number on a memo pad. Then he held it out to Yuki.

"Let's find it together. Until you can love yourself, discovering yourself you didn't even know and accepting yourself. I'll help you."

Yuki received the contact information and stood blankly.

She would have nothing to say even if she was kicked out being told not to say such nonsense, but this boy sincerely accepted her real wish.

"...Why?"

"Well... because we all live to be happy."

Hyun-woo looked at the blue sky spread out in the wide window in the office.

Yuki also followed that gaze and looked at the blue sky.

"Because there's no one who can't become happy."

"..."

Yuki seemed to understand why this young eccentric rich person was trying to help others.

'This person doesn't believe in his own happiness either.'

He's trying to find his own happiness while finding happiness for others.

Like that, the two on the day they first met.

Looking at the piercingly blue sky, they could empathize with each other.

"I look forward to working with you."

"...I look forward to working with you."

The moment two fates in the world that would never have met originally intersected.

The white starlight that finished its last blessing's calling escaped from the two people and returned to its original world.

The boy will continue to try to believe in his own happiness while helping countless people, and the girl will try to find ways to love herself beside such a boy.

The boy and girl who were not loved by the world met in a slightly changed world.

Their story changed a little but.

Nevertheless, it was continuing.

Chapter 164 : Epilogue 2 [Colorless Magical Girls] (1)

On a spring day with refreshing breezes blowing.

The wide grassy field used as the Magical Girl Academy's exercise ground and training field was bustling with the sound of one woman.

"Now, do it like this here!"

Under the warm sun, a woman was demonstrating various movements in front of girls. Following her movements, her hair arranged with a hairpin and ample dobok skirt fluttered, leaving afterimages.

As silver and green taeguk swirled, the woman poured out continuous attacks like a living storm.

Air exploding with one punch.

Space splitting with one kick.

Though it was a terrifying continuous attack just to look at, it wasn't enough to surprise the girls watching it.

Because they had grown up watching much more terrifying and mysterious magic of witches since they were old enough to understand.

For the girls, it was just annoying to have practical training time after this.

"I can't do splits like that..."

"I'm a summoner type, do I need to learn such things?"

"More than that, can't we just push with telekinesis?"

The girls clearly remembered the appearance of witches showing intense fights in <Witches' Duel>, but. There weren't many among them who fought crudely with just bare hands like the practice teacher in front of them.

"These days <Witches' Duel> is a firepower battle..."

"Yeah, wasn't the new participant amazing this time?"

Though they knew the practice teacher once achieved an undefeated champion record in <Witches' Duel>, that was just a past from several years ago, so. They still admired magic much more than physical combat.

"Always making us run and punch... this is why Magical Girl Academy PE class is boring."

"I wish magic practice time would come quickly."

The girls admired witches who fought more elegantly and coolly... like Sato Hana the Witch of [Swift] or their principal who fired massive psychic powers.

The sparkle of yellow Milky Way filling the sky.

Flame lotus obscuring even the magical beasts summoned by Mines.

Compared to the powerful magic of brilliant and beautiful witches, the practice teacher's demonstration was just crude punching.

"This... isn't a magical girl's way of fighting."

"Right, magical girls' fights should be brilliant and beautiful."

Letting such voices of complaint pass through one ear, the woman who had been showing fierce fighting against imaginary enemies for a while shouted to the girls.

"Now look, like this. If an enemy suddenly appears from behind, aim for the stomach rather than the head or legs, like this!"

Boom!

The fist thrust without even looking back split the air and made a huge explosive sound. Where that fist was aimed was the estimated location of an approaching enemy's abdomen behind the woman's back. The fist extending towards that spot created wind pressure up to over 100 meters away.

The movement of grass taking the shape of a fist and appearing up to 100 meters away was amazing, but.

That was it.

For girls who weren't going to fight the practice teacher anyway, it was just a somewhat interesting fist wind.

"Heh, this is a realm called 'Hundred Step Divine Fist'. It's a difficult realm that can't be imitated with half-hearted punching, so you guys just need to hit enemies behind..."

"We can just attack about 100 meters away by firing emission magic."

"..."

Stop

The woman in her late 20s, Ichika, who had been excitedly showing martial arts to the girls... new magical girls, had to stop her demonstration at those words. Not only was she upset at the Hundred Step Divine Fist realm being treated as an inferior version of magic firing, but she was more upset that they didn't understand the meaning of this class itself.

'These brats...!! How precious a teaching this is...!'

The realization of Ichika who spent most of her 28 years of life on battlefields

The essence of one who fought and overcame humans, magical girls, demons, Mines, trials... everything

She was displeased that they considered this precious realization just

a boring PE class.

'These little brats might have to go out and fight someday too. Is this soft method right?'

The magical girl training Ichika remembered was practical combat itself.

Pain with blood splattering

Determination surpassing even that

Clashing beliefs

Though the desperation of Chinese magical girls dreaming of revenge on Scavenger and girls belonging to the White Wing Unit was still vividly present before her eyes. Half-listening to the precious realization salvaged from that chaos...

'I'm worried... Big sister is really worried about you guys.'

From when she was first hired as a practice teacher, Ichika argued in meetings that rather than this bland method, it would be better to all rush to the garden and fight directly hitting each other. But Yuki rejected it, saying the education method for new magical girls shouldn't be the same as for themselves who faced destruction right before them.

-Because that must be achieved by one's own will.

Because our goddess just gave us opportunities to stand up on our own.

We must give opportunities to our children to stand up on their own and watch over them.

We must have patience to wait for children to grow into bigger trees, as much as the newly given peace and time.

Because in that gaze like white flames burning that Yuki showed, Ichika saw desperation for tolerance and realization she herself hadn't received. So Ichika quietly withdrew her practical combat-oriented

training plan.

"...Haah."

Master.

'Was this how you felt when you abandoned the old rough methods and taught us new training methods?'

Ichika sighed and plopped down in front of the magical girl who made the magic firing platform comment.

"Kids. Why do you think you need to learn how to fight?"

"Umm. Mines?"

"That's right, but S-class Mines that tell you to run away if possible are mostly taken care of at the witch level... frankly speaking, at Sato Hana's level. What's left are just small fry, and that much is enough to experience in actual combat."

"Ummm... <Witches' Duel>?"

"Is this some kind of fighting athlete training center?"

"But it's a fact that magical girl applicants increased a lot thanks to that program..."

"Ah geez! I don't know what you're talking about!"

Ichika ignored the chattering girl's words and continued speaking.

"The reason teachers want you to know how to fight is because we don't know what might happen."

"What?"

"To put it bluntly, what if an enemy we witches can't defeat suddenly appears? What will you do then? Who could have expected even us strong nations and adults would be helpless against demons right away."

"...Goddess?"

"Well that's true. But it's too different from the point of my words so let's move on... anyway."

Ichika calmed her heart surprised by the mention of Hikari, and looked up at the sky for a moment to gather her thoughts.

Ah

What was I trying to say?

What Ichika and her friends experienced while pioneering a path no one had taught them.

Words she wanted to say just as a senior who had gone ahead first.

Expectation that you would go towards a better path than us.

"Um. Uh... what I'm saying is this. We just wished someone had taught us these things."

"..."

"How to deal with it when a magical girl with massive power suddenly appears holding a grudge."

"..."

"How to fight to get less hurt when incredibly huge demons and cunning Mines suddenly appear threatening people."

"..."

"How we should have fought when companies trying to monopolize magical girls' power all picked fights at once while the goddess was gone."

Ichika summarized her somehow lengthened words in one sentence.

"We just wished someone had taught us. So I hope you guys know more things than us and get less hurt... that's what I'm saying."

"..."

Whoosh

A sea breeze containing warmth blew to Elysion floating in the sky, and swept over the heads of Ichika and the children sitting quietly holding their own thoughts.

Those gathered on the wide grassy field for the Academy's PE class sat feeling that breeze.

Ding-dong-dang-dong

The bell sound heard from far away.

"Sorry, I brought up such a serious story suddenly from the beginning of the semester. Let's end today's class here."

Ichika just flopped down on the grass.

The magical girls walked towards the Academy building while chattering about the next class time or where to play with friends after school.

"Um... teacher."

"Yes?"

When Ichika turned her head to look, it was the girl who made the magic firing platform comment earlier.

She had pondered deeply about the words Ichika gave earlier.

"Come to think of it, all Mines are swift, and adults trying to obtain magical girls' power have scary guns, right?"

"Yes."

"I don't think there will be many situations where we can always maintain a 100-meter safety distance."

"...Yes."

The girl kicked the ground with a somewhat apologetic look, but in the end couldn't finish her words and ran straight into the Academy.

So I'll listen more carefully next time.

She seemed to want to say something like that.

"Pfft."

Ichika felt somewhat proud hearing those words.

Though she was clumsy and unskilled, it seemed she succeeded in giving at least one person a chance to think again.

'Leader, I've become able to teach someone now too... just one person.'

Somehow it felt like a warm wind blew from the moon floating far away in the sky.

Ichika, who had been lying down for a while feeling proud like that, belatedly realized she had practice education for another class and ran away in a hurry.

* * *

"Noa?"

"Sis! Hello!"

"...Hello."

Sato Hana, who was flying around the world eliminating threatening Mines as usual today. She chuckled looking at the paper held out by two junior division graduate magical girls.

[Junior Division Graduation Exam: Experience activities working together with witches working in the field.]

"...Magical girls these days do things like this too."

Hup

Hana suddenly realized the words she muttered sounded too old and covered her mouth.

As if it wasn't enough, she had shuddered seeing witches who were active in the same generation as her changing their first digit one by one as she approached her mid-20s.

That's right.

Her current age is the same as when her parents had her.

On the day Hana realized that fact, she stopped dispatches with the excuse of being sick and walked along the beach for a while, complaining towards the moon.

'Ah, not yet... not even at Ichika's precarious level.'

Though Hana still swayed her long side tail she kept tied, she wondered if it was right to maintain this hairstyle at this age. But after seeing a girl's disappointed face asking why she changed her hairstyle when she went out with her hair completely loose once, she kept it.

An age where even hairstyle becomes something to be conscious of.

Hana had finally come to that age.

'...But something interesting is still interesting.'

In Hana's memory, magical girls were girls who fought by their own will following the goddess's guidance, but it was just interesting that such systematic education was carried out since the Academy was established.

These two girls came as part of that education.

Sato Noa and Yamashita Asuka.

"Hmm... so Noa, you said you want to follow me?"

"Yes! I want to fight together with sis!!"

"Did you say you want to follow me too, Yamashita-san?"

"Yes, and please just call me Asuka."

"Okay, got it Asuka."

A twin-tailed girl bouncing around happily about meeting her sister outside since earlier and a calm-looking girl wearing a horse head mask.

Between the two girls with completely opposite personalities, a reddish-brown cat was watching with its cloak fluttering.

"The education period is one week. I leave them in your care, guide."

"Pfft, alright."

Hana seemed to know who this cat with an old-fashioned way of speaking originated from, but. After hearing that realizing its own identity was its life's task, she refrained from speaking.

"I look forward to working with you sis... no, field trip teacher!"

"I look forward to working with you, teacher."

"Yes! Alright."

Hana felt ticklish at the word teacher.

'Teacher... I've become old enough to be called that.'

Though she had become the same age as when her parents gave birth to her, Hana still became the little magical girl in a yellow dress when visiting the cafe in Yokohama.

Ichika still laughed heartily and made silly jokes.

Kyoko brought coffee wearing clothes with strange patterns.

The three troublemakers of Yokohama were still playing pranks at the cafe even now after 12 years.

'Have I really become an adult?'

Sumire who became the Witch Association president and fiercely checks numerous companies behind the scenes.

Yuki who gives merciful teachings to numerous magical girls as the principal of the Magical Girl Academy.

Besides them, numerous witches who lived in a similar era were fulfilling their responsibilities in their positions.

And Hana's friend Hikari too...

"Sis!"

"Yes?"

"Where are we going today?"

"I do hope it's an intense battlefield. It would be of great help for Noa's education too."

"...With the Witch of Swift."

Hearing those words, Hana returned to reality.

To the reality her friend opened by sacrificing herself.

"...Huhu. Then shall we go on patrol together?"

"Great!"

"Yes!"

The young child who gave hope to adults became an adult who gives hope to young children.

That fact Hana herself couldn't be certain of.

The white light flickering on the moon affirmed it.

Chapter 165 : Epilogue 2 [Colorless Magical Girls] (2)

Sato Noa, a promising student in the Magical Girl Academy's junior division, had been looking forward to the field training.

To be honest, she was most excited about being able to experience the field with her sister who was always praised by outsiders.

The most shining magical girl.

The kindest witch.

When naming the most brilliant girl since magic appeared. It was hard to even imagine how sparkling and shining the dispatch scenes of the great sister, always mentioned within the top three fingers, would be filled with.

-Kitty! It must be a situation where over 100 S-class Mines appear!

-No, if that many appear, that country would be ruined...

Though it would surely be less than 1% of what her sister does, just imagining it made her heart pound.

-Sis will appear saying 'I appear like a meteor! In the name of friendship and swiftness! I won't forgive you!' and sweep away all the Mines!

-Isn't everything except 'like a meteor' just your imagination...

On the day the field experience learning was decided like that.

Sato Noa came running in one breath with an excited heart, thinking of surprising her sister, even hiding the fact from her parents...

"...It's plain."

Somehow... somehow unlike her imagination, Sato Hana's patrol was extremely plain.

Of course, she moved at a speed befitting the Witch of Swift, protecting Noa and Asuka with yellow starlight. But there were no numerous Mines threatening the nation, no critical crisis enough to terrify people.

What existed were small daily lives and gratitude.

"Oh my, thank you."

"It's nothing! Helping people like this is my job."

Carrying luggage for people with difficulty walking.

"Thank you, Sato-san."

"As expected, only Sato-san comes for things like this now among witches."

"Hehe, what do you mean such things! There's no unimportant work."

Mediation and resolution of small physical fights between ordinary people.

"Aaaack!!"

"Now now, if you just close your eyes and open them, you'll be at the police station."

Cleaning up C-class or lower Mines that high school division magical girls at the Academy could exterminate.

After thwarting the conspiracy to establish a maritime kingdom plotted by 7 seafood Mines that suddenly appeared in the city center. Sato Hana looked at Noa and Asuka while laughing in her unique refreshing voice.

"How was it?"

Even though she had become an adult, when Hana was in a good

mood, her long hair swayed like a dog's tail. Along with her active appearance wearing sportswear and shorts, it gave a vibrant and intense impression full of vitality.

Hana proudly exclaimed to her sister and junior.

"Isn't it really fun? Protecting people's smiles."

Hoping her sister could share a deep impression from protecting this daily life.

"Hehe! This is what magical girls in charge of ordinary Mine patrols usually do."

"...It's plain."

"It's plain."

"Uh, yes?"

Strange.

The reaction is more withered than expected.

Noa had clearly said her dream was to work with her while dreaming of becoming a magical girl.

Hana broke out in a slight cold sweat and observed Noa's expression. Thanks to raising her sister who was over 10 years younger by carrying her on her back, she could roughly tell what emotions she had just by looking at her eyes.

Disappointment

Boredom

In her sister's eyes, the only positive emotion left was familiarity from being with her sister. There was no admiration or satisfaction for helping people.

'Oh.'

Looking closely, boredom was also seeping out of the girl named

Asuka's face. The excitement that was felt even beyond the horse mask had disappeared, and she was playing while fiddling with a doll.

'Did I do something wrong?'

Hana looked back on today's work wondering if she had missed something.

She helped people and received gratitude from people.

There were problems, but not enough to ruin people's daily lives.

Not as desperate as the time of trials, not as gloomy as the magical girl acquisition war...

"Ah."

Hana scratched her cheek and seemed to understand why these children were bored.

This scenery obtained through fierce battles and sacrifices of friends for Hana was a natural scenery for the two girls. Rather, what they want is probably the appearance from that time when Hana was fiercely fighting.

'What should I do.'

Hana pondered how to make these children realize the preciousness of 'protecting daily life'. She thought it was too early to show them the horrific scenes of crimes committed by S-class Mines in the past, or the numerous vested interests and adult circumstances entangled in the <Witches' Duel> program.

That is an outrage that will only plant cynicism in young children who can't even perceive the beauty of reality.

It's a scenery they can see even when they seriously try to overcome reality.

What these children need is to realize the 'preciousness of now'.

What Dad had told her on the day meteors fell once.

'Now I have to tell them that.'

Hana approached her two juniors and held their hands.

Warmly and gently like her friend once did to her younger self. But unlike her who was calm like the silver moon, she must tell them with sparkle like a meteor.

"Noa, Asuka."

"Yes?"

"Yes?"

Looking at Hana who suddenly took their hands, Noa and Asuka opened their eyes wide.

For Noa, her sister's hand she held more often than her mother's when she was in kindergarten.

For Asuka, an unfamiliar hand extended by an admired person who often appears on TV and the internet.

Though they were hands extended by the same person, the emotions the two felt when grasping those hands were different. But the direction those hands led towards was the same place.

Hana led them towards a sparkling daily life.

"Shall we go on a week-long picnic together?"

* * *

[...So we traveled around various places and saw many people smiling.]

Thud

Noa put a period on her activity log and put it back in her bag.

After finishing the field experience activity, one of the graduation

exams, if she gets her sister's signature and submits it before going to the Academy tomorrow. Now Noa will graduate from the junior division and become an intermediate division magical girl.

'I wonder if it's okay, since we just played for a week.'

A dreamlike time passed.

Noa and Asuka were sitting on folding chairs under the night sky.

"The night sky is really pretty."

"Yeah."

Because they always only came to the Magical Girl Academy during the day, the unfamiliar night sky of Elysion was full of stars. It felt like a mysterious scenery not visible in Tokyo where Noa and Asuka's homes were.

Under the sky full of countless stars, the two girls started talking about the topic of the Magical Girl Academy far beyond the open field.

"I heard you stay in the Academy dormitory when you go up to the intermediate division. It would be nice if I could be in the same room as Asuka then."

"Right? I'll introduce you to a lot of kids I've been close with since the junior division."

"Hmph, I think I know more than Asuka."

"Then let's all wear pajamas and introduce each other all night."

"I heard the practice teacher is also the dormitory supervisor... I think we'll get hit if we don't sleep."

"That teacher is a bit stupid, so she probably won't know if we just turn off the lights."

"What if the golden sisters fly around watching?"

"Let's talk with blankets covering our heads."

The two girls chattered for a long time about the intermediate division dormitory life that had suddenly come right before them.

Teachers

Friends

After-school activities

Surely the intermediate division life will have much more diverse activities than the junior division. And in Noa and Asuka's eyes, the intermediate division uniform with various patterns and decorations added seemed much cuter than the mostly white junior division uniform.

"Noa, want to drink hot chocolate?"

"Yeah, thanks Asuka!"

Asuka, who had become close with Noa during the week though they were in different classes at first, took off her horse mask and was heating milk over a bonfire while looking at the night sky. Behind them, a tent Hana had brought from home in a flash was already set up.

"I've never been camping before."

"Really? Our family likes going out with sis and parents, so we went often."

"No wonder you two completed the tent so quickly."

"I was surprised that Asuka knows so much about dolls."

"My mom makes dolls."

Things they know well.

Things they don't know well.

Scenery they haven't seen.

As they get to know each other, their worlds gradually expand, and they learn about numerous daily lives and emotions hidden under scenery they thought was natural.

During the week, the two girls saw various things while chasing after sparkling meteors.

"We really went to many places."

"Yeah, we went to so many."

They played together with children their age who were hospitalized, sharing dolls at a hospital where aid groups were working.

They performed clumsy and awkward dances and songs at a talent show at a senior welfare center where the guard corps was patrolling.

They visited stores and workshops run by numerous magical girls and chatted.

They saw magical girl autonomous organizations operating in different ways from Japan while looking at foreign cities.

News taken for granted, scenery taken for granted.

They faced people living and breathing within them and their dreams.

"..."

"..."

"...I thought I would naturally be able to do amazing things like sis when I became a magical girl."

"Yeah."

"But it seems that's not it, magical girls... it seems that's not it."

"Yeah."

Were ordinary people's dreams and happiness really more shabby than magical girls' starlight?

Were magical girls just lights shining alone falling in the dark night sky?

They weren't.

Children their age they met at the hospital, who couldn't become magical girls but lived happy lives.

Elderly people they met at the event, whose lives were already fading but cherished magical girls.

Numerous people they met abroad, advancing on their own paths with different thoughts.

No life was natural, and the starlight shining within them wasn't given from the beginning.

Where, who, when. These things weren't important.

The important thing was what they wanted to become.

'What kind of magical girls do we want to become.'

The two girls realized that through their week-long adventure.

"I... want to become someone who makes people happy though plain, like sis did on the first day."

"I want to become someone who makes dolls that make all people happy to see."

Under the dark night sky where only the bonfire was shining, two colors of starlight descended along with quiet resolutions.

A girl who started running looking at the darkness where meteors began.

A girl who resolved to make dolls modeled after everyone's hope.

The glass stars of the two girls were no longer colorless, but became brilliant gold and silver.

The two colors shining most brilliantly under countless stars blessed

the start of the two girls who didn't yet have even one starlight. People who knew the meaning of that sparkle were just quietly watching over their realization.

"Th-This is amazing."

"...Yeah."

Sato Hana was on top of the observation lighthouse that could watch over the entire island, to create time for the two girls to think. She was making an expression full of nostalgia and intense emotion while watching the starlight her juniors found at the end of their journey. Beside her, the reddish-brown cat was dozing off wrapped in its cloak.

"Pe-Perhaps a massive fate we don't know has begun from those two."

"But why is Hecate stuttering like that?"

"I-I haven't talked to people for a week."

"Haah, I wonder if it's right to live just doing what you like while leaving everything to Iris."

"It's a li-life permitted by the go-goddesses."

Hecate scratched her short hair she had cut off right above her neck saying it was annoying to manage. Over the past 12 years, she had gone from one game tournament to another, and finally realized that enjoying games through internet broadcasts got the best reaction. She was continuing a life of seclusion.

Hana looked at such a Hecate pathetically for a moment, then looked at the two sparkling starlights again.

Golden

The brilliant color of fate she may have once had.

Silver

A color only allowed to those who could love the world.

"..."

Watching the fate of magical girls beginning more purely and brilliantly than her own fate that the three goddesses had broken.

Hana quietly smiled.

'I am like a meteor.'

A meteor burns itself in the atmosphere and greets numerous people on the ground.

But it's just a moment of sparkle.

Though she is burning brilliantly in the current era, it will be forgotten someday.

'The era of destruction and despair... the dark night needing heroes is ending.'

Then what direction will those two girls advance towards?

"Magical girls of comets."

"..."

"They'll become magical girls like comets more brilliant and advancing further than meteors living now."

Hana earnestly hoped her sister would become a girl shining even in hope.

"Bu-But what feels close to those living on the ground is meteors."

"Huh?"

"You don't need to think of yourself so shabbily."

"..."

"I will remember. As a recluse of the era."

"...You're still secluding yourself anyway."

Hana and Hecate watched over the two girls' realization while making silly remarks.

The two starlights were what shone most brightly under the dark night sky, but they couldn't obscure the numerous starlights engraved behind them.

* * *

Ding

"Welcome～"

"I'm here."

"Oh! Hana-chan! Welcome."

Hana came to visit the third troublemaker of Yokohama she had known for 12 years.

A leisurely weekend afternoon

The latest pop and rock music was playing in a cafe in Yokohama.

"The usual today too?"

"You know me well."

"It's regular customer service."

Wink

Kyoko winked and started preparing the drink right away.

Her straight black hair swayed.

Since officially becoming the owner, Kyoko's hair that no longer dyed had become completely straight black. At first Kyoko's appearance like that felt awkward, but now the time when she had orange hair felt more distant.

Swish

A hand naturally landing on Hana's shoulder as she entered the store.

Dobok skirts wide enough to overflow below the shoulder.

Ichika touched Hana's shoulder, which had now grown bigger than hers, with a playful smile.

It was an action she always showed before making silly jokes.

"Hey, is this the legendary Hana-chan who let field training go for a week of playing hooky?"

"Kuku... Ichika, that couldn't be helped."

"Thanks to that, there was a fuss at the teachers' meeting about whether to acknowledge this or not."

"What did Yuki say?"

"Huh? The principal said the glass star colors changed and the kids matured, so isn't it good?"

Just then, Kyoko approached the table carrying the ade Hana often drank.

"Oh, did Noa-chan bloom one sword?"

"No, not blooming, just the color changed."

There were many employees busily working in the store, so Kyoko who had become free joined Hana and Ichika's chattering table.

"Come to think of it, Noa-chan is about to become intermediate division too... it feels like just yesterday Hana was flustered changing her diapers. It's awkward that kids we've seen since they were babies are middle schoolers now."

"That's true."

"Time really flies... to think we're single late 20s in the blink of an eye."

"...Momo-chan got engaged recently."

"What?!"

Now only Ichika and Kyoko were single among the girls who escaped from the research facility.

"Haah."

"Hooh."

Hana chuckled listening to the two late 20s women's complaints.

"Huh?! Don't laugh Hana-chan!!"

"Hey, you'll be there soon too."

"I still have over 5 years left though?"

"This brat...!"

Rock music playing

Fragrant coffee aroma

Sounds of numerous people's conversations

"Huhu."

Hana's life was shining brilliantly like a meteor.

It was still starlight greeting people face to face.

The meteor was still burning brilliantly.

Chapter 166 : Epilogue 3 [Life is...]

On days when white snow falls, one unconsciously begins to expect.

Because when snow accumulates along with silence under the dark sky, even familiar scenery looks sublime and pure. A lovely white overlays the scenery we live in, making even everyday scenes special.

One

Two

Stars connect

Crunch

Crunch

Snow falls.

Footsteps one didn't notice before are heard, and when snow melts away with each breath taken for granted.

When all sounds disappear one by one, and all people suddenly look up at the sky.

In white moonlight.

One recalls in a corner of memory the existence of a certain girl watching over us from above the sky.

White girl.

It feels like she might come down with a snow-white and pure appearance and show that smile again.

It feels like she might show a snow-white smile and say the waiting is now over.

It feels like if one jumps into her arms, the nostalgic warmth would return.

[I'm back.]

[Welcome back.]

One always has such expectations.

* * *

Winter has come.

"Haah..."

When Yuki closes the door of the old house and leaves for work, blowing white breath, it's a thought that comes when white gently covers her view. Once again winter has come and the time to wrap up a year full of many events arrives.

Students move up a grade.

Girls look forward to next year.

Adults get more wrinkles.

Elderly people reminisce about memories.

Though Yuki had seen people welcoming winter in their own ways while experiencing numerous things among people. For Yuki, winter was a season to reminisce about and wait for one person.

'Winter has come again.'

When this season comes making both cheeks numb with cold air, one side of her chest aches recalling the image of the girl who came running wearing black clothes. The clumsy appearance of that girl seen through adult Yuki's eyes also comes to mind, making her feel nostalgic.

Crunch

Crunch

When winter comes and snow falls, footsteps are especially well heard.

Crunch

Crunch

In footsteps not usually heard, memories and emotions not usually had intersect.

Crunch

Crunch

With each step, memories of her come to mind making one miss her, today's schedule comes to mind making one urgent, expectations for tomorrow come to mind warming one's heart.

The reason for taking the long way instead of going directly through fate threads to hear footsteps when winter comes.

Winter riverside

Warmth

White

Love

"Oh? Principal?"

Magical girls on their way to school approached and greeted Yuki who was walking holding all those times in her heart. Their young principal had gravity and strength unsuited to her age, but was just a kind older sister when encountering her normally. So Academy students liked Yuki.

New memories enter between precious memories.

Yuki doesn't shun that, but puts precious memories in a corner of her heart. And she smiles at the students approaching to greet her. Seeing that smile, girls leaving home for school flock over.

"Principal!"

"Ah Principal, hello!"

"Hello."

"Want to go together?"

"Yeah, sure."

Numerous girls approach and make conversation bloom on numerous topics.

"So this time the etiquette teacher～"

"Why do you always wear a red coat, Principal?"

"A bandaged dog keeps stealing bread from the school store!"

"Is there really a crow among the guides? I've never seen one."

"I heard the kids who moved up to intermediate division this year are amazing?"

Chatter chatter

Voices of girls full of vitality that even snow covering all sounds can't completely swallow.

Though Yuki originally prefers quiet, she didn't find such words from the girls noisy at all or frown. Because that was what she had wanted when she once ran away from people due to a burn scar.

Rather, she was grateful to be able to become an adult living in such times.

'I have more stories I can tell again.'

It would be nice to talk while walking in the snow with her.

* * *

"Interplanetary connection? Is-Is that possible...?!"

-Well, even if it fails, all I'm wasting is time and my starlight, so it's a profitable business to try.

"The distance to Mars is quite far, it would take quite a long time to install."

-I already scattered space-spec temporary fortresses and warp gates at regular intervals matching the orbit on the way there once.

"...You're extremely thorough."

-Actually, the news embargo on starting Mars colonization worldwide will be lifted soon. I contacted you and Sumire in advance to let you know before that.

As another day passes and it's time to prepare to leave work.

A sudden long-distance call came.

The other party was Kang Dorim.

Yuki was talking with Kang Dorim who suddenly announced the Mars colonization plan and immediately left for Mars. True to someone who had been the brain of the Grand Council, her unconventional thinking and bold ideas were jaw-dropping.

'Though her appearance still seems like a girl.'

Though 12 years had passed, Kang Dorim's appearance didn't seem to have changed much from when she was in middle school.

But the passion and energy emitting from that small body grew stronger as time passed.

Yuki still couldn't forget the moment they left Earth.

Mars Colonization Plan.

They say such recruitment phrases circulated in Korea from when

Kang Dorim first conceived this plan that gives goosebumps just hearing about it and created an interplanetary transport ship several kilometers long.

[Dangerous journey, long travel (minimum 10 years), outer space, rough pioneering business, unpredictable adventure but upon success, planning to award part of Mars territory along with great honor and glory.]

A dreamlike story.

A human trajectory shining enough to overwhelm even the legend of magical girls and starlight.

To Kang Dorim's call trying to step into a realm that existed only as science fiction, people residing in South Korea answered like this:

"Come on, what space... space is."

"That's what I'm saying."

"I thought she was a smart girl but she's completely reckless?"

Young men who checked the recruitment phrases at bars all stood up while laughing wryly.

They couldn't miss the glory of leaving this stifling land and pioneering a new continent... a new star.

They were already used to boring waiting and stifling group living.

"So where do we apply?"

"I should do it right away."

Applicants flooding in and media delivering news of the Mars colonization plan.

In the year that plan was announced, only the word Mars was on people's lips.

Adventure begun.

The Mars Pioneer Quirinus, which departed with thousands of applicants, advanced at an unreasonable speed imbued with magical girls' magic, and finally arrived and started full-scale Mars colonization. After 2 years of journeying like that, contact came from Kang Dorim.

-There was quite a big discovery.

Kang Dorim wearing a silver spacesuit that clung to her body had a serious face.

-We found it there, there's a 'will of stars' on Mars too.

"..."

Yuki's mind went blank.

Star

Goddess

Magical girl

As numerous words and pains flashed by, her hands trembled.

To think that power her beloved girl sealed by devoting her whole body exists on Mars too.

What on earth is this.

-Wait, don't be too surprised. I'm going to say it's different from the power existing on Earth.

"Dif...ferent?"

-To use an analogy, if the will of stars on Earth has developed into a form like a living organism or system, the will of stars here is close to chaos that hasn't yet taken any form.

"The environment where the goddess of [Beginning] appeared?"

-Yeah.

Kang Dorim said while clenching her fist on screen.

So we can use this chaos.

If we can just send even a very faint power through the fortresses and fragments scattered in the orbit our star wanders, to seal the wound.

-Perhaps

-Perhaps if we can connect this power and send it to Earth...!

-Eunbit unnie won't have to endure inside the wound recklessly.

-Not only that, if we can connect the wills of stars between planets, the realm of magical girls and humans will expand further. This world itself can expand beyond stars to the universe.

Beyond stars to the universe

For Yuki, those words were too big and difficult. Even with 4-star power similar to the old goddesses right now, it only went as far as caring for the human world and burning away ominous things popping out from the star's wound.

But there was only one thing Yuki could hope for and dream of.

"Hikari."

She doesn't have to heal the will of stars alone inside the wound.

We can make her return to the human world again.

Just that fact alone made her heart beat fiercely and feel like tears would come out.

If you know that things that advanced in the world you protected

Can create a path for you to return here again.

Will you smile brightly seeing those things?

Yuki met Dorim's eyes and quietly resolved.

"Is there anything I can do to help?"

* * *

"Wow, it's been so long."

As Ichika said looking around while clicking her tongue, the sight of the ark where those who had bloomed ten thousand powers gathered again was truly a nostalgic scenery. Actually it was too desperate a memory to call nostalgic, but the waves of time had swept away all those emotions and left only nostalgia.

Advancing universe.

Moon gradually approaching.

Looking at that scenery, Yuki called that name she had repeated for a very long time again.

"Hikari."

Nostalgic name.

When she called that name, 4 stars floating behind Yuki's back shone creating a halo.

As brilliantly as the white halo of a girl who once led girls here.

"..."

"..."

That time back then.

The girls who had risen to protect people from destruction had all become adults.

"Really... I couldn't even imagine a day like this would come again."

Sumire, who hid her arms and legs in a purple suit, had become an even more mature and calm person.

"Huhu, it feels like we've gone back to the old days."

"That's what I'm saying."

Ichika and Hana who had been free became people who could think of children younger than themselves and teach.

"Is this also something I must witness. The future is truly unknowable."

Hecate muttering in a soft voice became a person who could watch over and understand others from one step behind.

The girls fought following one girl's guidance, and became adults during the time she was gone.

Now those who became adults finished preparing to go meet the girl continuing a lonely fight.

-Are you ready now?

Everyone answered Kang Dorim's voice coming from far away Mars with energetic voices.

"Yeah!"

"Of course!"

"Yes."

"Certainly."

-The <Dabih> plan that transmits the will of stars from Mars... creates a passage to welcome our goddess. I'll start now.

————!!

Massive resonance

The world vibrates

Space shakes

Something composing this world was moving greatly, one could feel.

It approaches slowly.

No,

It approaches quickly.

Very fast and intense, but because it's separated by that enormous distance.

Though it looks like it's approaching slowly from the universe's view, it was an incredible speed impossible to follow with human eyes.

One by one

One by one

Following installed warps

Following scattered guidance devices

The power of chaos that originally couldn't be moved by human power was approaching.

-Now!!

"Hikari."

White starlight containing white love burned intensely and was fired from where it blocked the will of stars.

"Hikari-chan!!"

Yellow starlight containing yellow friendship shone brilliantly and was fired.

"Leader... I really want to see your face!"

"Hikari-san... we want to show you, the world we've advanced!"

Green trust and violet responsibility.

"Humans are now ready to frolic with goddesses. So come back quickly, goddess. Let's play a game together."

Silver-white faith.

The starlights that most earnestly recalled the white goddess shone dazzlingly, creating a brilliant pillar of light on the lunar surface. They waved becoming flags guiding the tremendous chaos approaching from far away to find its way.

Magical girls who lived on Earth and heard the goddess's story.

Numerous adults who fought against destruction.

All earnestly tried to create a path for the goddess to return, containing their respective hopes and dreams.

Numerous colors intertwined to become myriad colors more brilliant than white and fluttered.

The world she protected now tried to receive the power approaching from far away on another star to welcome her.

Among them, Yuki most earnestly recalled the girl fighting below the lunar surface she was standing on now while emitting starlight for chaos to enter.

-It's connected!!

When a voice full of joy was heard, everyone emitted stronger light of hope.

For the goddess.

People without glass stars recalled hope seeing that sight.

For hope.

The will of all was gathering for a single purpose at this moment.

Pouring chaos and myriad colors containing everyone's wishes were intertwining and becoming one with the star.

A light greater than primordial chaos, and as warm as human wishes.

Pillar of light.

A brilliant pillar of light arose on the moon and was being absorbed into the star's wound.

Faaaash...!!

In intense starlight where everything before one's eyes seemed like it would be sucked into the light, Yuki could vaguely tell that Hikari too was trying to grasp that starlight.

'Hikari...!'

Now if we can just advance a little bit more, we can send the white girl back into the world again. As such hope arose in everyone's hearts.

The light disappeared.

"Wh-What?!"

"Did it work? Did it work?"

Ichika and company looking around in confusion.

Yuki couldn't hide her bitterness among them.

Hikari's main body was still in the middle of the star's wound.

"..."

-I can't send any more because the facility output is too weak, sorry.

"No."

When everyone sat down disappointed.

Yuki was just looking at empty space while pulling herself together.

Next time.

Next time for sure...

[Don't give up.]

"Huh?"

Yuki turned towards where the voice came from.

There was an unfamiliar girl there.

White hair

Red eyes

Though infinitely resembling Hikari, completely different from Hikari.

She was smiling gently.

"Be...ginning?"

[A very small fragment.]

The final fragment left by the goddess of [Beginning].

Yuki

Hikari

Hecate

When all the girls completely opened their power once again.

A very faint fragment remaining there reacted to the complete chaos that had briefly returned, appeared in this world then disappeared into empty space while whispering.

[Thank you.]

[For fighting for the world until now.]

[For finding a much more excellent answer than me.]

[For finding an answer in a world we couldn't even imagine.]

[So... devoting everything, I'll leave 'fate' lastly.]

Eventually she completely turned into white snow and disappeared.

The last remnant of goddesses remaining in this world disappeared like that turning into snow.

"...Snow."

For Yuki, snow always made her look forward to today.

And if it's a place where fate is tied with Hikari, there was only one place she could guess.

And she felt it.

Our send-off didn't fail.

Though Hikari's main body was still on the moon, fate was connected.

"Yuki?"

"Sumire."

Perhaps worried about herself staring blankly at empty space, she felt warm concern from the artificial hand gently placed on her shoulder. Yuki answered Sumire with a more confident smile than ever.

"I'll be back."

"What?"

Leaving behind Sumire's confused face, Yuki ran out wrapped in white light towards Earth.

* * *

On days when white snow falls, one unconsciously begins to expect.

Because snow always came bringing miracles.

One

Two

Stars connect

Crunch

Crunch

Even one footstep running towards her feels special.

"Haa... haa...!"

Hikari

I have so many things I want to tell you about how we advanced in the world you protected.

I have so many things I want to do for you who watched over me from long before our story began.

You know?

Actually there was only one thing I wanted to tell you first.

"Hikari...!"

The park scenery passes by like an arrow, and snow falls shining faintly receiving the city's light from the dark sky above. While running through there, Yuki's life flashed through her mind one by one.

Numerous fragments of memories mixed up confusingly, then dyed one color and began shining brilliantly again.

White

For Yuki, hope was a dazzling white.

Hope's white came to Yuki again along with snow falling from the sky.

After running for a while, 'that bench' appeared before Yuki's eyes.

"..."

"..."

Step

Step

Approaching slowly, a girl wearing white clothes she had seen sometime was sitting there.

Five lights were floating brilliantly around her body.

She was blankly looking at the sky with red eyes watching snow fall.

The white girl opened her mouth between white hair.

"...Actually I half gave up too."

"..."

"You guys were doing well on your own, and 'I' from another universe excellently embraced those remaining."

"..."

"I wondered what reason there was for me who had changed to be close to a star to return to this world."

Stop

Yuki now faced that girl sitting on the bench.

"But there was exactly one reason I had to return to this world."

"What?"

"You."

"..."

Hikari stood up smiling gently just like that appearance seen back then.

The girl Yuki had to look up at for a long time feeling intimidated

could now see each other at similar eye level.

"Because I love Yuki."

"...Yeah."

"I really loved Yuki from long ago."

"Yeah."

"Maybe it was my first love as Shim Hyun-woo. Funny, right? To feel my heart flutter falling for an imaginary story."

"No."

Pfft

Hikari clenched and unclenched her hand once.

Yuki could understand why she made that action.

Because her main body was now gradually becoming one with this star, and she had come down to this world through the Galatea sent flying through the gap filled with fragments of chaos that came over from Mars.

Goddess

She had truly become a goddess with such massive power that she couldn't even carelessly enter the human world.

"I also fell in love at first sight with a girl I saw for the first time."

"Really?"

"Yeah. Actually I fell for you at first sight."

"I see."

"Funny, right?"

"No. I'm touched."

"My heart feels the same."

"I see."

"Yeah."

Plain tone

Quiet voice

How can even their attitudes revealing their true feelings be similar?

Thinking that.

The two girls were drawn to each other and gradually approached.

Perhaps because they already knew each other's hearts, they thought it would be calmer.

But the endlessly beating heart in the plain tone that became composed before time intensely conveyed warmth.

Thump thump thump thump

Warmth felt when grasping both hands

Thump thump thump thump

Eyes drawing closer through feet stepping towards each other

They came close enough to feel each other's breath.

White hair and black hair intersected and intertwined.

Tingle

Along with intensity like only the two of them were left in this world, softness came.

Clack

Teeth collided and eyes trembled slightly.

Brown and red

Thinking even each other's trembling eyes were beautiful, they stood feeling warmth.

Closing eyes in embarrassment, then opening eyes again and smiling seeing each other's eyes.

They stood facing each other like that for a long time.

Lips separating

"..."

"..."

Numerous words came to mind, but now none come to mind.

Heart and heart connect and give birth to a miracle.

That miracle was already a miracle numerous people shared and achieved.

But for these two most special girls in this world, it was a miracle that had just come.

People called that miracle love.

The two girls pressed their lips together again in miraculous time.

Warmth

Warmth

Softness

Surprised by teeth colliding.

I love you

Detecting signals sent without words.

When grasping both hands, pulses beating as if about to burst were

felt.

Is this a miracle?

"I love you."

"I love you too."

Fate created by miracles intertwining.

It returned connected with miracles again.

The two girls faced each other by that riverside where they first met, looking at the sky where white snow fell and recalled.

Life is...

It seems like something unknowable.